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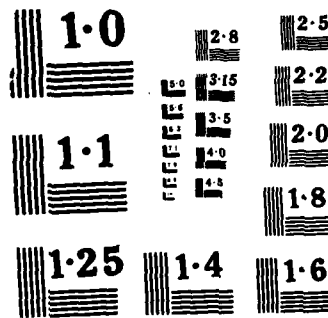
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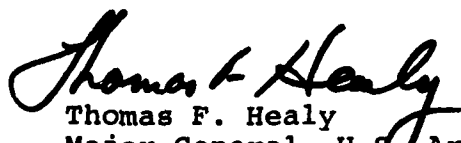
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FOREWORD

This educational booklet of experiences has been prepared by spouses of students at the US Army War College, Class of 1985. The Army War College is deeply indebted to these ladies who gave generously of their time and energy to produce this booklet for use by Army wives around the world. A special note of thanks to Linda O. Anderson who conceived the idea for the booklet, nurtured its development, and carried it through to its completion.

In 1984, the Year of the Army Family, great strides were made in acknowledging the importance of wives for developing and protecting the well-being of the Army. The role that they and their families play in Army readiness is rapidly expanding. The articles in this booklet are applicable across a wide spectrum of Army families. I sincerely hope that this booklet will assist those who choose to fill the dedicated, selfless and important position of the Army wife in the years to come.


Thomas F. Healy
Major General, U.S. Army
Commandant

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INTRODUCTION

This book is written by former battalion commanders' wives and others with equivalent experience. Our willingness to honestly share our experiences is based on a sincere desire to help military wives. An additional article by a current brigade commander's wife clarifies the relationship between battalion and brigade.

Our hope is that in reading this book, the information we share will lead to new self-confidence and new insights. We offer this very personal look at the choices that were ours to make as we shared this special time with our husbands.

We think it is important to remember the choices a military wife makes will affect many lives. We want this collection of ideas to help other military wives to make the choices which are best . . . for her, for her husband, and for her Army family.

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BATTALION COMMAND: AS VIEWED BY A BRIGADE COMMANDER'S WIFE

by

Victoria P. Crouch

You are about to embark on one of the most interesting, challenging, vital and responsible adventures as the partner of a leader--the battalion commander. How lucky you are to be doing this now as the Army formally recognizes what has been true for its two hundred years--there is a partnership in the command! You are and can be the magical quality which turns a job into an experience and just existing into living. Sound like a big task? It is, but whatever you put into it will come back twofold.

Much has been written in the past few years about the importance of the command partnership and the Pre-Command Course is continually being updated and expanded. These excellent tools have been compiled and designed to help you better accomplish your leadership role in the unit your spouse is to command. Be familiar with these tools and use as much as is pertinent to your situation. There are as many philosophies on command and expectations from higher levels as there are people who fill these roles. It would be wonderful to have a list of ten rules, which if followed to the letter, would guarantee success--alas, not so! There are, however, some general thoughts which might ease the way. Know that it takes six months to become completely comfortable in the role you are about to assume. It takes that long to know the people, what you want and what they want. Don't rush it, it will come with time. How you choose to guide the wives in your unit must be comfortable for you. You must set your own priorities. The command experience is not one of competition or comparison, but one of cooperation and comradery as everyone pulls together toward a common end--that of the professional soldier, ready and able to do his job, and the family unit leading a healthy life within the parameters of that job description.

You have the most difficult and yet the most important job in working toward this goal. You are the "man in between," the conduit for philosophy and the implementer of programs. It is through your mind and eyes that Department of Defense concepts, such as "The Year of the Family," are filtered and interpreted. Great philosophies can be developed, but those developers cannot see them through--that is up to you. You guide the company level wives who influence the soldier and his family and support those community programs which make his life one of quality. He or she will be a better soldier for knowing that when he must do the job he is trained to do, his family will be secure.

While you are doing all of this remember two things--you are not alone and you have a friend. Out there are fellow commanders' wives with whom to share, support and exchange ideas. The brigade commander's wife is your friend. She is not there to judge, but to listen, to share, to help, to be a sounding board, and if asked, to render opinions. Use her! She expects and hopes you will do the best you can according to the priorities you have set for yourself and your family.

As a brigade commander's wife, I would ask two things of you--communicate and teach. Communicate with the next higher level of command as you would like the next lower level to communicate with you. Communication must flow in two directions. Specifically:

1. If you have a unit newsletter, send me a copy!
2. When you publish a new roster, send it along!
3. Let me know when there is a birth, hospitalization or personal loss within your unit. This I call the "doctrine of no surprises."
4. Share with me new and exciting things you are doing.
5. Send me an occasional invitation to a monthly get-together or social function.

All of these devices serve to let levels of command become better acquainted and feel more comfortable with one another.

The second thing I would ask of you is to teach. Much thought, by a lot of people, has gone into compiling information on how you can better accomplish the role of the commander's wife. You, in turn, can better prepare those working with you for a potential leadership role. Include junior wives and NCO wives in community projects, welcomes and unit functions. Provide for them the opportunity to learn the specifics of hospitality, caring, giving and receiving. Teach them that assuming responsibility and a leadership role has its own rewards. The most important thing you can teach is self-sufficiency--those skills which allow the soldier and his family to help themselves adapt to the ever-changing conditions inherent in the profession he has chosen.

The Army is indeed a family in that we are bound together in a way of life and must look inward for much of our strength and support, but we, as commanders' wives, are not "Mothers" except to our own children. We are partners of professional leaders and by sharing, communication, teaching and example, we can guide those around us to a sense of that professionalism. Above all, enjoy what you do and make whatever space through which you pass the better for your passage.

FINDING YOUR OWN IDENTITY

by

Cathryn C. Franks

Congratulations! Your husband has been chosen for one of the most important jobs in the Army, and he wouldn't be where he is today without your support, encouragement, and love.

That last statement is not meant to be an endorsement of the "quiet little woman behind the man" view. I do have pride in my husband's accomplishments and I share great pleasure with him when he is given awards and decorations for what he does in his work, but I need my own identity and self-fulfillment before I can truly be the supporting wife he needs. I want to focus on that aspect in this letter: "finding your own identity."

My own "tour of duty" was for three years in Germany, from 1981 to 1984. Our post was small enough that the battalion commanders' wives were included as the senior ladies on post and it was assumed we would carry on the many traditional responsibilities of the Army wife. After four years at the Pentagon, it was an abrupt change! It is hard to find your own identity when your social life is filled with activities you are expected to attend only because you are "Mrs. Battalion Commander." If you are able to take control of some of these activities and find rewarding work in them rather than resenting the time they require from you, you can be your own person and support your husband at the same time.

One of the activities is the Officers' Wives' Club, or as in my case, the Officers' and Civilians' Women's Club. This is a club most officers' wives join without giving it a thought. I joined, and three months later, when a vacancy occurred on the board, volunteered to become the welfare chairman. I believe the welfare work done by these clubs is extremely important, especially in communities in Germany where outside resources in many areas are limited. I was able to work hard, help my community, and achieve a real feeling of self-worth and self-identity completely separate from my obligations in the battalion.

Close to the end of my year as welfare chairman, our new nominating committee chairman called and asked me to run for the office of president of the wives' club. I was very hesitant to accept this office because of the time requirements involved and the family and battalion commitments I already had. Also at this time our community commander's wife asked me to be a discussion group leader at the annual American Women's Activities Germany (AWAG) Conference, giving a speech on welfare activities to help new welfare chairmen of organizations all over Germany.

I protested that I had too many battalion obligations for either of these activities. (After all, I had already "found myself" and I didn't need the additional work!) However, I knew that I was happiest when busy and I believe it is important to set an example of active participation for the other wives in the battalion. This point I cannot stress enough. I was fortunate enough to have terrific role models in a community commander's wife and a brigade commander's wife and I worked very hard to set an example at my own level.

Many wives new to the military do not understand the importance of the Officers' Wives' Club and may view it as merely a social group for ladies to have tea and gossip. This may actually be the case in some instances, but it is up to the individual members to turn that Club around and make it into a service organization. I finally agreed to run for president and to give the welfare speech at AWAG. As a result I had the most fulfilling year of the three years of my husband's command and went back to AWAG a second time as the welfare discussion group leader.

There are several points I want to make regarding accepting an outside obligation of whatever kind while your husband is in command. First, be sure it is important to you and that you will be willing and able to give it a sufficient commitment of your time and energy. Also, coordinate with the wife senior to you and junior to you in your husband's chain of command, particularly junior to you. I had full support of the battalion XO's wife who agreed to keep me informed of anything I might be too busy to notice regarding the other battalion wives. I realized how important a link she had been when her husband was transferred and the new battalion XO was unaccompanied! Also, you need the support of your husband and family. I was fortunate to have a husband who supported me in my obligations as I had always supported him in his.

The battalion responsibilities I had did not go away and I did not stop giving information at coffees, giving dinners for new officers and their wives, welcoming new wives, attending teas, giving a New Year's Day reception, and the many other obligations of a battalion commander's wife. I believe you can get information on these activities from many previous writings of others. I hope I have been able to share my experience in finding my identity and feeling of self-worth while being "Mrs. Battalion Commander."

BUILDING A BATTALION FAMILY

by

Linda O. Anderson

INTRODUCTION

The call to command came unexpectedly, and with very little preparation time. We knew the previous commander left after only one year in command, and that this was a battalion in trouble.

When we arrived, the XO had been in charge of the battalion for almost two months, the battalion wives weren't sure what was happening, to their husbands, or to the battalion. The upheaval had everyone nervous, uncertain of their futures, and I was scared to death!

SPECIAL EVENTS

The battalion became a part of the regimental system during our tour. Changing name, number, and unit affiliation, after working so hard to make it a great unit was not easy. Retiring the old colors, and handling the transition in a most positive way was critical, as was involving the wives in the process.

We were part of COHORT, and received an entire company of newcomers. The experiment, still in its early stages, was a difficult and time-consuming project.

PERSONAL PRIORITY

Encourage an environment that would give a sense of belonging, self-worth, security, and pride to battalion family members. Provide a support system that would allow friendships and good times to occur naturally.

DEFINING YOUR ROLE

Wives aren't in the Army, wives don't have rank, and to quote General Maxwell Thurman, speaking to 500 military wives at the 1984 AWAG Conference in Berchtesgaden: "Wives should never be mentioned in a husband's OER."

As a battalion commander's wife in Germany, you will be expected to know Army regulations; you will be encouraged to accompany your husband to social and military functions. You will be asked to recruit volunteers for all sorts of community

organizations, and you will certainly be expected to volunteer yourself. You will be asked to support quality of life projects, you will be encouraged to take an active part in improving German-American relations, and the battalion wives will look to you for leadership, guidance, comfort and support.

To the best of my knowledge, and from my own experience, both of those two paragraphs are accurate. If you feel there is a conflict between the two, you are not alone. If the conflict bothers you to the extent that you are unwilling to fulfill the above mentioned "duties" of a battalion commander's wife, or if for any reason you choose not to be on the "Command Team," let your husband know before he assumes command.

After twenty or so years as an Army wife, you probably have used every possible excuse, at one time or other, for not participating in battalion, club, or community activities. Don't be surprised when it comes back to haunt you as a battalion commander's wife. Just because you have suddenly become an active and highly visible volunteer leader in the military community, the wives in your husband's battalion have not. They are not afraid to refuse your requests to participate, and they don't fool around with thinly disguised excuses. They simply say, "No thanks!"

That is pretty refreshing, because when they do want to help, they are willing to make a significant contribution, and it is your attitude which will often influence their decision to take an active part in the battalion family.

Be willing to work extra hard as a battalion commander's wife, to make up for all those years when someone else felt the burden of responsibility. Your example will do worlds of good in shaping the attitudes of future battalion commanders' wives. (It's a sobering thought: Like it or not, ready or not, because of your husband's position, you will be the role model for wives in the battalion.)

CHOOSING YOUR OPTIONS

If you are anxious to get on with the challenge of being a battalion commander's wife in Germany, I am thrilled to share my experiences with you. In considering how I could most accurately describe the specifics, I decided to use one of the letters I periodically wrote for the officers' wives. This particular one was written during the last six months of our 34-month tour, but each letter was similar in that my purpose was to keep the wives, old and new, informed (See Enclosure 1).

The goal of wanting the wives to be informed so they would feel involved led me to write a very informal monthly newsletter, and I was very happy when the Sergeant Major's wife decided to write one for the enlisted wives (Enclosure 2). We did our best to keep all the wives informed, and together with regular letters from the Battalion Commander (Enclosure 3), special fliers and posters, no battalion wife missed a chance to participate, if she chose to do so. I wanted to establish a solid Chain of Concern for the battalion wives, and that would have been impossible without good communication flowing both ways.

WORKING WITH CONTEMPORARIES

Even in the warm afterglow of battalion command, it would be unrealistic not to mention problem areas. They do exist, and for me they most often occurred outside the battalion.

A battalion commander's wife in Germany has division and community responsibilities, and to meet them you must work and socialize with the other battalion commanders' wives.

Ideally, each battalion commander's wife will want to carry her fair share of the community workload, even if the direction and division of that workload isn't clearly defined. When problems arise, it is important to remember that battalion commanders' wives are not in competition with each other. Each of you belong to the same Army family. Sometimes, you might have to do the work of two battalion commanders' wives, without complaint and without recognition, especially if the project at hand is one personally important to you.

PLANNING WIVES' ACTIVITIES

Like so many battalion commanders' wives before me, I'm sure I spent a lot of effort trying to "re-invent the wheel," especially in the area of activities for the wives of all ranks. This one area is filled with frustration, but even modest success reaps many benefits for the battalion.

I will list a few ideas that met with varying degrees of success for our battalion, but whatever your ideas are, you are the one wife who is able to initiate activities, projects, and programs which will allow friendships and mutual respect to develop among the battalion wives. Keep in mind also that these activities can't be dictated. Doing so will alienate the very wives you are trying to reach. And . . . be flexible. Your battalion might prefer to have some of these activities at the company level.

If the wives do prefer planning these activities at the company level, it works to everyone's advantage. You get to share some of your responsibilities, the company commander's wife gets a chance to develop her own leadership skills, and the event is much more likely to be a success. (Large headquarters companies might even prefer platoon level activities.)

1. "Welcome Home" baked goods when the men return from the field.
2. Bingo Games, Pot-Luck Dinners, Picnics, Trips.
3. Christmas Parties for Children, Sports Days, Decorating Company Dayrooms during holidays.
4. Welfare and Community Improvement Projects.

Planning sessions can be half the fun, so include as many wives as you can. Make certain all levels are represented, to avoid the appearance of officers' wives planning an event for enlisted wives, or vice versa. Listen to all ideas, and be responsive to the needs and interests of all the wives. (If no one wants a fashion show, why have one?)

Besides being fun, planning sessions help you to know the wives in the battalion. More important, the wives become acquainted with you. All the while you are working together, you are helping to create the environment that the finished activity will help to achieve--a battalion family.

KEEPING TRADITIONS

Young Army wives want to understand important military customs and traditions. Take every opportunity to share this special part of the military way of life with the battalion wives.

KEEPING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

The best advice I can give an incoming battalion commander's wife is to keep your sense of humor. The wives in your husband's battalion will certainly need to keep theirs as you struggle through those first few uncertain months. Whether you have been an Army wife for twenty years or whether you are a newlywed . . . as a battalion commander's wife, you are a rookie!

Don't be embarrassed to ask for help, and don't try to cover your very understandable insecurities with aloof superiority. Referring to your husband as "The Colonel," pressuring wives to volunteer, and dividing wives according to their husbands' ranks will not make your life any easier in the coming months.

All Army families have to make sacrifices and deal with the pressure and stress of an overseas assignment. As a battalion commander's wife in Germany, you can do a lot to alleviate some of those unpleasant facts of life, for your husband, for the wives in the battalion, and for yourself.

Saying "auf Wiedersehen" to the battalion will be one of the saddest things you ever have to do as an Army wife. Hopefully, you will leave the battalion with:

- Experiences to share with others.
- Memories to last a lifetime.
- Friendships to renew, when you meet again.

SPECIAL HINTS

1. Read The Commander's Link, and if at all possible, attend the Pre-Command Course.
2. Start a scrapbook before you arrive in Germany. This will make a super gift for your husband as his command ends, but it will also be filled with memories and good ideas for later years.
3. Save your calendars and newsletters. They provide an excellent record of activities and achievements.
4. Establish a solid partnership with the XO's wife and the Sergeant Major's wife. Ask for their ideas, and share your plans with them before you make general announcements. Even if they choose not to help, you should keep them informed.
5. Write lots of thank you notes!
6. Write "I missed you" notes when wives don't attend battalion functions. Do your best to make even non-participants feel included . . . without pressure.
7. Don't use "all ranks" to describe activities that are planned for battalion wives. Much preferred is "all wives" or "battalion wives."
8. Keep the brigade commander's wife up-to-date on what the battalion wives are doing.
9. Don't consider your predecessor as a rival, and don't think of your replacement as a threat. Be considerate, thoughtful, and loyal to both of these ladies.
10. Relax and enjoy this very special time in your life.
11. Be accessible.

P.S. You might want to give each incoming officer's wife a welcoming gift and a special farewell gift that is from just you. I gave each new officer's wife a copy of Those Strange German Ways as she joined the battalion. When a wife left the battalion, she received a cross-stitched sampler that simply said, "Dear friends are not forgotten, they live within your heart." When it was time for me to leave, I gave one to each wife who remained after me so no one would be left out.

Hi Everyone!

I want to catch our newest wives up-to-date on 4-41 procedures, and it surely is hard to do at our coffees. I'll just write it all down, and also take this chance to let everyone know nothing we do is chiseled on stone tablets. We can change, modify or improve just by making suggestions.

MONTHLY WIVES' GET-TOGETHER

We take turns hostessing and our get-togethers are in the evenings. They are held on either Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday of the first week of the month. Invitations should be out about 10 days in advance, and they can be xeroxed, handmade, bought, or whatever you like.

Our get-togethers are always relaxed and casual, so no need to worry about "fancy fixings." If you want, you can have a program, a special guest speaker, or plan anything you think our group will enjoy. The hostess can get \$5.00 from our treasury to help purchase a door prize. Selling chances on a door prize is how we maintain a treasury without having to take up dues. (I hate dues! Just doesn't seem right to have to pay dues to belong to a battalion wives' group.) And, with our door prize money, we are able to:

1. Buy welcome plants for newcomers.
2. Keep a candy basket in the mailroom during maneuvers.
3. Buy a nursery planter for newborns.

And, we always have enough money to support projects that come up.

FAREWELLS

Upon leaving 4-41, you might choose to receive a memento of our group. At the present time, it is a framed print of the Osterholz Windmill, and it costs 25 DMS. You order these through the unit treasurer. No farewell gift is bought out of the treasury funds. This procedure of not using our treasury to buy individual gifts, as well as the "no dues" policy, keeps us in line with IG and USAREUR regulations governing wives' groups.

HOSPITALITY

The battalion provides a sponsor for every new officer. Our wives' group has a Hospitality Chairman who greets every new

Enclosure 1

officer's wife. Along with the XO's wife, the Company Commander's wife and myself, the new wife's welcome is warm and friendly. The welcome process is the most important thing we do as a group--everyone helps, and it really makes a difference.

Because we are in an overseas assignment, we rely on each other more than we would in CONUS. The battalion replaces family, friends, and neighbors who would be so readily available in the states. This concern for each other extends to the enlisted ranks as well, and this is where company wives can assist the chain of command.

Welcomes, Special Projects, Parties, and Coffees for "all wives" are more effective at the company level. These activities are never dictated by battalion, but they are worthwhile efforts to pursue. Coupled with the Battalion Sponsorship Program, Quarterly Family Briefings, Mess Hall Family Nights, Pot-Luck Dinners and Trips, company-level activities strengthen a battalion.

BATTALION SOCIALS

Officers and wives have a monthly party called a Hail and Farewell. The companies take turns hosting, and in the last two and one-half years we have had some fantastic times together. This is a key reason why our battalion is so special.

Dean would be quick to add: "The social life of a battalion is most important, especially in an overseas assignment. Officers are expected to attend all social functions, but 4-41 wives are not in the Army, and they never are forced to attend or support battalion activities."

Those are Dean's words, but I can tell you he is real glad 4-41 wives want to attend and enjoy the good times. Me, too!

Besides our monthly parties for officers and wives, the officers periodically have a Dining-In. I'm sure your husband can fill you in on this important military tradition.

QUARTERLY FAMILY BRIEFINGS

The battalion staff is in charge of these briefings which provide families with information concerning 4-41 as well as the community. The SI provides valuable handouts, the mess hall provides refreshments and we, as a group, provide door prizes, as well as babysitting, so the wives can get the most out of these briefings.

OWC

No wife is pressured into joining the OWC. I would like for every officer's wife to know what the club offers and what it contributes to the community, but no one has to join.

The same goes for ACS and other community volunteer work. No wife should ever feel forced to volunteer, but at the same time, we do need to know what makes an Army community click. I'll do my best to keep you informed, and hopefully you will continue to help out as you can.

SHOWERS AND GIFTS

Wedding and baby showers are not battalion functions. They should not be combined with our regular get-togethers as this would force wives into buying a gift in order to attend.

4-41 Officers have a Cup and Flower Fund. It provides wives' pins, baby cups, wedding trays, flowers for new wives, farewell plaques for officers, and flowers for the hospitalized.

RECAP

I haven't taken the time to restate these things in quite a while. Hope I didn't forget anything, and that this answers any questions you might have had. I want everyone to know how the battalion works.

Dean and I will be leaving on 15 June. The incoming battalion CO and his wife are very familiar with the division and this area, but they will need your warm welcome and support in getting settled.

The other battalion commanders' wives will help the new battalion commander's wife in getting settled, but she will need your help and friendship most of all. The next time I write to her I will include this letter as a little preview of our group. I've already told her how wonderful you all are.

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO. YOU ARE THE BEST!!

"WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?"

by

Priscilla P. Brinkley

Everything from raking and lining baseball fields, to waiting tables, to listening to ladies' problems at 2 a.m., to being one of Santa's elves at the border camp, to rappelling down a mountain, to being presented a huge bouquet of red roses in front of the rathaus with hundreds of people watching.

All these things and much more! Whatever needs doing, whenever. It is all interesting. Some fun, some tears, but never dull and boring.

The first and most important thing to do as a new battalion commander's wife is to smile and observe. Wait. Don't try to fix what isn't broken. Understand the mission of the unit.

Get to know the CSM's wife and find out what's happening with the NCO/EM wives. Let her "deal," but offer to help, if necessary.

Meet with the staff officers' wives and troop commanders' wives, get to know them, and find out their needs.

Take a tour of the post and find out what facilities and services are available for the use of the soldiers and family members of your unit. Study the Army regulations that you will need to know to be an adviser.

Realize that your unit and its needs and problems are unique. Ask for help. Try to use the wife of your husband's commander to help. Make friends with the chaplain. He can help you and other people.

Love your husband and family. Make them the most important people in your life.

Admit you aren't a superwoman. Don't worry that you can't solve all the problems and don't know all the answers. Try to know where to send people for help.

Remember that when you work to help others, your own problems will diminish. Try to get your ladies and families involved in unit and community activities. Know that some don't and won't participate.

Periodically step back and look at the rest of the world. Get your life into perspective again. Try to spend time with contemporaries.

Some situations require confrontation and sometimes a problem must be ignored. Remember, that "problem lady" will move on sooner or later. Don't get put in the middle. Let "your" ladies stand on their own feet. Try to "be there" when needed, but all people need to make their own decisions.

- Listen!
- Be Yourself!
- Love Your People!
- Have fun and enjoy!

And, when you leave, help the new commander's wife by tidying up loose ends. Make her feel welcome with open communication. Leave records of traditions, but not too much. Allow her to be herself, just as you are. Remember how you felt coming with little advance communication.

UNTRADITIONAL COMMAND

by

Susan G. Barber

I would like to share my experience as a battalion commander's wife with a battalion stationed in a remote area of Germany. By so doing, I hope I can illustrate there are battalion commands that can be quite untraditional.

My first and most important recommendation would be to learn as much German as possible, either through the learning center at your current location or with an adult education program. If at all possible, accompany your husband to DLI, for all or as much of the course as possible, concentrating on vocabulary and conversational German.

The most unusual aspect of this command was the limited peer group with whom to compare or share activities.

The social services of this community were supported by the Women's Club, or by community volunteers. The battalion wives were not responsible for any support other than to encourage people to contribute to the community well-being.

We did not meet as a battalion group, but grouped with officers' wives whose husbands were stationed with the battalion support organization.

The most wonderful aspect of this type of command is the freedom to enjoy the community and its members. Especially important is meeting the Germany community. The local German-American Club is a wonderful way to meet Germans and to form warm friendships that can continue beyond your tour.

I would also encourage taking courses at the local "folkschule" as another means of meeting people and learning the culture. The courses offered are the same as our high school adult education programs.

Another opportunity we had, which is common throughout Germany, was association with a partnership unit. This exchange is an excellent way to experience the culture and to form friendships with military people from Germany.

Two unique aspects of our community were the Women's Club and the club system. First, the Women's Club was open for membership by all American women. The organization was extremely successful. Support and leadership came from officers' wives, enlisted wives, and female military personnel. The consolidation allowed stronger support towards a unified effort among a small group. I would recommend this arrangement to other small communities.

Secondly, you may find that there are not enough officers to support a club. There were two clubs in our community. The Supper Club, also housing the golf activities, provided family dining and space for parties and club meetings. The Community Club was also available to all for meals and provided weekend musical entertainment, especially popular with the younger soldiers.

Another consideration could be the limited medical facilities, small exchange, and commissary. One might have to travel two hours or more for specialty medical treatment. We did, however, have an adequate dispensary and pharmacy. The commissary and post exchange were adequate. Larger facilities were found within 45 minutes to one hour distance.

With the rising strength of the dollar, great pleasure could be derived from shopping on the economy for clothes, and especially for the local foods. Patronizing the local stores is also a wonderful way to practice your new language skills.

The youth sporting activities were varied and adequate, but to allow competition, teams had to travel up to four hours for weekly games.

I felt that my most important job in our situation was to be aware of the community needs and to lend support wherever necessary. Take advantage of the limited responsibility and enjoy the experience of another culture and the beauty of another country.

REMOTE ASSIGNMENTS

by

Christine S. Cook, Chairman	
Linda O. Anderson	Priscilla P. Brinkley
Mary S. Busbee	Linda C. Gorski
Linda K. Hemming	Martha A. Schumacher
Carol Ann Shoesmith	Sandra K. Stutz

With the realization that everyone's perception of a remote assignment will be different, a number of interested Army War College wives have contributed to this article. We have chosen to focus on those assignments which meet the following description:

An assignment without the normal support systems available, or an assignment without other American military associates.

These hints have been compiled to help you meet the challenges of a remote assignment, and to offer ideas which you can then share with others who share your adventure.

We have chosen to divide these hints into those which apply before you arrive and those which will apply during your tour of duty. Finally, after your tour is complete, share your experience with those who will follow.

BEFORE

1. Communication through letters, telephone and tape-recorded conversations between you and your sponsor is an effective system. If you feel you are not receiving the information you need from your sponsor, contact the unit and ask questions. Contact others who are there or who have been there in the past.

2. Ask if there are particular products you should wait to purchase there, e.g., parkas, cold weather outer wear, sneakers, jogging suits available in Korea.

3. Visit your local ACS. See if information is available on your new assignment.

4. Check climate. Purchase, before you leave, any special clothing and equipment you will need. Don't rely on your household shipment to be waiting for you.

5. Never travel to a new assignment without complete medical records, sufficient money to cover emergencies en route and needed personal items (medicine, personal hygiene supplies, etc.).

6. Always travel with phone numbers you will need upon arrival and know the name of your new unit.

7. Check on availability of special dietary needs, e.g., formulas.

8. Get all information available. In addition to ACS, check with the library and State Department.

9. Prepare your children positively for the experience. Read books about the area and surrounding areas with them to pique their interest in the upcoming adventure and to learn the customs.

10. Learn the language. Whether you are fortunate enough to be sent to language school or must learn it on your own, you owe it to yourself, as an ambassador of your country, to learn a little about the language and culture of the country to which you will be assigned as a sign of respect to those you are "visiting." You will have more fun and less fear if you can speak and understand at least some of the language.

11. Decide from the start that "this will be the best tour ever."

12. Remote assignments often mean leaving college-age students in the states. This is a family hardship which can be softened by careful planning and special preparation.

13. "Overseas medical facilities will require DEERS enrollment beginning in 1985." Sponsors can check on their family member enrollment by contacting their local military personnel office.

14. CHAMPUS is available worldwide. For information before you need it, contact the CHAMPUS Health Benefit Adviser at the medical facility nearest to your remote area.

DURING

1. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Everyone had to go through the same "new kid on the block fright" and is more than willing to help you get settled.

2. If your new unit does not provide the needed assistance, let that be made known in the proper way to the chain of command. "Nothing will be fixed if people in charge don't know it's broken." Once you have signed in to a unit you are a part of the family and, therefore, have a responsibility to make things better.

3. Form a "Chain of Concern" or support with other members of the command or group who are also remotely assigned.

a. Publish a roster of names, addresses and phone numbers of people in the same country or command, no matter how far flung the areas in which you live--you all still have things in common.

b. Establish a monthly newsletter or some other form of written communication to publish news that is of a common interest and to provide a tangible link among those in a similar situation.

c. Establish a monthly "open house" coffee day that is on a regularly scheduled basis to give those in a similar situation something to put on their calendars to look forward to each month. Attendees may have to drive a considerable distance to get to these gatherings, so be sure they are publicized well in advance.

4. All during your assignment, keep a journal or notes which you can pass along to your replacement. They may be on scraps of paper stuffed into a file folder, in a proper journal, or just scrawled daily on a calendar. This is an invaluable source of information to pass along.

5. Join local clubs: OWC, NCO/EM, PTA, Eastern Star, Welcome Wagon, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and become active in Church or Chapel activities, etc.

6. Surround yourself with things you love. For instance, your piano, if it's your source of pleasure. The minute you arrive, start a collection of plants to take the focus off yourself.

7. Set up a system with parents, relatives, and close friends for them to call you once a month. Calling from the states is cheaper and you can share the expense.

8. If possible, plan one trip home when on a three-year assignment.

9. When living on the economy in a foreign country, invite your neighbors in several times.

10. Plan at least two trips out of your remote area each year. Dependents, in particular, need to get a breath of fresh air.

11. If you do not receive AFN radio or TV, have plenty of games and reading material. It is also fun to have a video recorder and have friends and family send tapes or you can join a video club.

12. Always have a good sense of humor!

13. Be true to yourself and be good to yourself. Then you can deal with all that may be required of you.

14. Force yourself to become a good correspondent. Receiving letters is a boost.

15. Do something to get out of the house every day.

16. Take tours of the remote area.

17. Learn crafts or information special to the area.

18. Offer crafts in many areas or classes in a variety of subjects. Use talents of people in the group.

19. Start a catalog library and order every catalog you can find.

20. Contact military service facilities closest to you and let them know where you are and what you need. For instance, the nearest American hospital may be able to send "OUTREACH" medical and dental teams to hold well-child and well-women clinics.

21. Use senior ladies for help and support. Ask them questions.

22. Create a guideline for sponsors so they may be effective starting with first contact through arrival and "settling in."

23. Work with NCO/EM wives to meet their needs as well as those of the officers' wives. Work closely with the CSM's wife.

24. Be available.

25. Reward people.

26. Try to see that the soldiers' needs come first. Understand the mission, and explain that mission in depth, especially to disgruntled or unhappy wives.

27. Enjoy host nation activities. Ask your husband's counterpart's wife if she can set up tours and get-togethers for host nation and American wives. You can plan typically American ladies' functions and invite the host nation wives.

28. Have specific activities for the group and a well-organized communication network among enlisted and officers' wives.

29. Survey the group to find out interests and needs.

30. Keep in mind the cost of living expenses in your area and plan activities accordingly.

31. If your remote unit does not have a medical person assigned to it and you must use host nation hospitals and doctors, find a wife from that country married to an American who would be a willing volunteer translator to accompany people.

32. If you have a boarding school situation for children of your area, get to know the teachers and dormitory counselors. Let them know you still want to be a part of the school and you want to keep informed by mail and phone. Visit the dormitory as often as possible. Try to meet people in the community where the dorm is located. They can be a comfort to the children--someone to call in time of need or just to talk. And a word to those who will never face boarding their child: Please don't say to a parent who is: "I'd never board my child." It is a personal family decision.

33. Check on the distribution system for receiving local newspapers, Stars and Stripes, ACS Bulletins, and club newsletters, as well as News for Army Families. This publication is published quarterly and distributed by PXs, Commissaries, medical facilities, etc., and might not reach your remote area unless you ask for it. No Army family should feel they are so far off the beaten path they cannot receive current information. This is a morale booster you can provide.

34. Recognize that the situation is temporary and it is an opportunity to learn, so relax and live!

35. Adjust, adapt, and enjoy!

AFTER

Be available to those who will follow to pass along good, positive information.

SPONSORSHIP: ONE WIFE'S VIEW

by

Linda O. Anderson

Sponsorship, by Army tradition, and by official doctrine, is mandatory. How well it works depends on who sets the standards, who monitors, who sponsors, and what priority the chain of command attaches to it.

My feeling is that without vigilant attention, sponsorship programs can sometimes end up on everyone's back burner. Worst casing it: The battalion commander tells the Sergeant Major to take care of newcomers, and he assumes it is done. The Sergeant Major tells the First Sergeants to take care of newcomers, and he assumes it is done. The First Sergeants assign sponsorship duty to whomever is up next on the roster, and they too assume it is done.

Under this set of all too common occurrences, it is little wonder that Army families occasionally don't get sponsored as we would like. They get off to a bad start with their new unit and sometimes even decide to get out because "the Army does not take care of its own." It happens!

Understandable slipups occur when soldiers are diverted en route from other assignments and no one knows they are coming until they land on the doorstep of the unsuspecting unit.

All too often, in our battalion in Germany, we wrote letters and sent welcome packets to soldiers, only to never see them. Their orders were changed after they arrived in-country, and they became, in spite of our best intentions and efforts, that unsponsored family on someone else's doorstep.

Mistakes happen, systems break down, and as a concerned battalion commander's wife you might want to provide the backup that will keep your husband's sponsorship program for families on track.

(I'm sure it is obvious a family can best be sponsored by another family.)

I asked my husband if there wasn't some way I could assist with the family sponsorship program. He and the NCOIC of the PAC devised a very simple solution:

Every new soldier who reported in was required to fill out a card which listed address, names of family members, and ages of children. My husband brought this card to me on the day he

received it, and either I, the Company Commander's wife, First Sergeant's wife, or their representative visited the new family within 48 hours. (This was in addition to the normal welcome process instituted by the Sergeant Major.)

As concerned wives, we could find out for ourselves how the families were being sponsored and if they needed further assistance from us. We were checking to make sure that new families to the battalion were warmly welcomed.

If they were in a gasthaus, we made sure they knew how to use the telephone and that they had our numbers. We gave them the added assurance they were important members of the battalion family.

In most cases, we found the sponsors (and their wives) had already met and exceeded the immediate needs of the families.

Very little actual effort was required from us, but our concern was appreciated, and it did make a difference.

BE YOURSELF

by

Mary Anne Shlenker

I distinctly remember the phone call from my husband announcing that he had been selected for Battalion Command. It was the ultimate; the dream we had looked forward to had finally come true. The icing on the cake was his command was to be an artillery battalion in the 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii. Settling down after the initial excitement and upcoming challenge, I had one year to dwell on the idea of being a battalion commander's wife, and wondered if I had the knowledge to tackle such a position. Did I know enough to be able to give guidance to the junior officers' wives? Would I be able to answer all of their questions? I must admit I was more than a little unsure of myself as the time drew near.

During our husbands' Army careers, we meet many, many people. We see commanders' wives whom we know we do not want to be like, but we see some whom we use as "role models." As you use that model, always remember to "be yourself."

One of the first things I did was write to the outgoing commander's wife for all the information she could share about Hawaii, the battalion, and her duties. Her return answer was informative and complete. The battalion had a wonderful reputation and the shoes would be hard to fill. My husband and I spent many evenings discussing how we would work hard together to make the battalion even better, if possible. Our motto would be "Work Hard--Play Hard"!

Upon our arrival in Hawaii, we were warmly greeted by the Divarty Commander, his wife, and the outgoing battalion commander and his wife. The Divarty Commander's wife was warm and friendly and quickly set most of my fears to rest. The outgoing battalion commander and his wife helped us move into our quarters, making everything as easy as possible for us. As the time drew near for the Change of Command, we had many informative talks about the battalion and duties expected. This helped me greatly for experience speaks for itself, and I listened. Some of the duties included committee meetings, Divarty Commanders' wives meetings (monthly), special coffees or teas at the Officers' Club or the generals' wives' homes, calling on each new officer's wife informally, making sure NCO and battery commanders' wives were calling on newly arrived enlisted families, and writing a monthly newsletter.

Our policy for new arrivals was to ensure that everyone had a sponsor and was met at the airport, adequate hotel or guest house was available, and provide transportation. The sponsor also helped in any way until the family was settled in their quarters or home off post.

Our monthly battalion officers' wives' coffee was always very informal and always different in theme. This was left up to the hostess. Bachelor officers' fiances were also included, plus "old timers" were always "honorary" members and always welcome after their departure from the battalion if they were still in the area. The generals' wives and division staff wives were invited to at least one battalion coffee per year.

Our husbands deployed frequently off island, sometimes for three to six weeks in duration. The wives became more dependent on each other and we entertained ourselves with pot-luck dinners, dinners downtown, playing cards or games, and beach parties which included the children, to name a few. Each get-together was a combined effort, so cost was minimal. We became a large, happy family and it was a comfortable feeling.

Before each major deployment, all families were invited to the battalion area for a briefing and a display of equipment. The children loved seeing where "daddy worked." We established a Chain of Concern for all dependents which was very helpful. I was notified of any problems by the battalion rear echelon or the battery commanders' wives.

I worked closely with the Sergeant Major's wife. Her friendship was imperative to me. Not only did she keep me informed on the enlisted families at all times, I found I could depend on her. The NCO's big project each year was the annual Christmas Party for the battalion and it was always successful. She helped me organize the "welcome home" projects after long deployments. As each battery arrived home, they were greeted by banners, signs, and families awaiting them in the battalion area. Home-baked cookies, decorated cakes, coffee and juice were available. All of us worked on these projects and reaction from the troops was wonderful.

Involving myself with the OWC proved invaluable. I found not only was it enjoyable, it helped me meet and make friends, thus knowing my contemporaries better. I enjoyed the friendship of other battalion commanders' wives. We shared ideas and were always there to help each other.

Fortunately, the Commanding General's wife was gracious, and I had her total support in guiding our battalion wives. She never interfered. The Assistant Division Commander's wife was a very friendly, outgoing and sincere lady who always had time, good advice, and a smile for everyone. We had wonderful "role models."

I found the best guideline as a battalion commander's wife was to "be yourself." A good, open rapport with your battalion wives will help them feel comfortable with you and you with them. I always stressed to each of them that I was always available to them at any time. They soon realized they could confide in me. I had their trust and that is very important. They were like my family.

My days of being a battalion commander's wife drew to a close after 37 months. It was truly the most wonderful, enjoyable, and memorable experience of my husband's career. I will never forget those days nor the wonderful young men and women. My only hope is that they learned to live and love the Army and each other as we have, through our example, guidance, and love. Those were truly "the best years of our life."

ARMY HOSPITALS HAVE MILITARY LEADERS TOO

by

Sue Ellen Wolcott

When I heard about this project, I thought "Wonderful! I wish I had had some idea of the kinds of things to expect in new situations beforehand, and some idea of what had been tried (and whether or not it worked). I've done some big jobs as an Army wife. I've made some mistakes (nothing that hurt anybody else, luckily), but I've done a good job, so I must have learned something before I got there. I know I learned a lot doing them, and have continued to learn since. I wonder if this would be of any use to others?"

I found that while what I have learned is valuable, it is difficult to communicate it to others, since the organization of the Medical Department is unfamiliar to so many. Therefore, I will not go deeply into specific experiences, choosing instead to fill out the scenery of this "unknown world" a bit, and to present a theory that has been proven and a plan that has worked--presenting it in as general a way as possible so that a person in a similar situation might make use of it.

In addition to various levels of command, the Army Medical Department (AMEDD)* has many positions of responsibility that are not commands, but which correspond in their size and complexity to the various levels of command common to other branches**. The responsibilities of the AMEDD officer's spouse parallel those of the spouse of a TOE commander who has a similar number of officer and senior enlisted subordinates . . . but there are some differences, not the least of which is that the officer may be the wife and the spouse the husband, culturally unprepared (as well as frequently unwilling) to fulfill the current job description of officer's spouse. Of all branches in the Army, the Army Medical Department has the highest percentage of women, so that their spouses are not only men but also, for the most part, fully employed outside the home (irrespective of their spouses' ranks). None of the three most commonly used "solutions" is entirely appropriate or acceptable: (1) the female officer does both jobs (officer's and spouse's), or (2) the spouse's job falls to the wife of the highest ranking or most significantly positioned male officer subordinate to the female officer, or (3) the spouse's job devolves on the highest ranking female officer subordinate to the first (possibly moving far down the chain before someone personally assumes the obligation.)

Because the professional/technical chain of authority in an Army hospital is separate from the chain of command, there are some difficulties for both the officer and the spouse that would never arise in other branches where the chain of command and the chain of authority are the same.

One difference that comes to mind is rank. The most senior officer does not automatically occupy the position of greatest professional responsibility. In a professional chain of authority, it is possible to have an officer working for a doctor who may be junior in age, years of practice and military rank, but is professionally "senior"; because of the "headquarters company" type of command structure, every colonel is a member of a company commanded by a captain. The social "structure" does not ordinarily follow either of these chains, but usually is arranged along the lines of the everyday working groups which are made up of all ranks (including civilians), almost certainly from more than one professional/technical chain. This means that many of the things which occur more or less naturally when the command structure and the social structure are the same do not happen without some care and planning on the part of those in positions of responsibility and their spouses. Additional complications include: many medical professionals are married to other medical professionals or to professionals in other fields (including the Army) who may themselves occupy positions of responsibility; hospitals are open and staffed 24 hours a day through an elaborate network of personnel schedules and duty rosters; and even a small- to medium-sized working unit may have just about every level of expertise, training, age, etc. in it. Just wording a flier to include all (not to mention offending as few as possible) and getting it distributed to all concerned can be an undertaking akin to tightrope walking!

For those with the responsibility, the question arises of how to organize this unwieldy thing to promote good morale and "esprit de corps." I can tell you from experience that the answer is not "leave it alone and it will happen." No matter how trite it sounds, the truth remains that it is always necessary to let every member of the organization (including families) know that he/she is seen as a valued contributor to the smooth functioning of the whole, and that this contribution will assist in the organization being able to achieve important goals. We have twice moved into organizations where this necessity had been neglected and found not only no "esprit de corps" but also anger, frustration, discouragement, depression, and just about any other kind of negative climate you can imagine.

In both instances, clarifying the goals made it possible for all concerned to begin to be able to see where they fit into the larger group--and I mean all service members and family members. Without a mission there is little way to evaluate one's contributions. A medical unit, particularly a hospital, usually has not only its goals of training to support soldiers in combat but also its daily goal of patient care, which for some units is a constant battle with life and death. For a spouse, this may mean that the person one married (to walk through life together, right?) not only is actually out of the

house a lot more often than in, but that when "in" is still mentally and emotionally "out." It is a very rare spouse who can cope successfully with that kind of life for years on end without the assurance that the sacrifices, dedication, and support were valuable contributions to an important goal.

Some form of organized social life is a second critical element in pulling a hospital work group together. It is important for the members of a work group to have the opportunity to meet together outside the workplace in a non-threatening atmosphere so they can form, extend, and strengthen bonds that will enable them to continue functioning as a unit. When the workplace bonds are stressed or weakened, the social bonds can hold the unit together. If the social bonds also fall apart, a sponsored framework of activities is often necessary to start mending them, since people who have decided they don't want to do things together won't do so spontaneously, they must be led.

We arrived in July 1973 at a large medical center/teaching hospital where my husband was to start up a unit in the Department of Medicine. The Chief of Medicine had found on his arrival a few months earlier a climate characterized by people not only working together poorly and not socializing with each other, but also actively trying to undercut and sabotage each other's work! He did all the expected things in the workplace, spotlighting the mission, and imposing structure on the working situation to minimize damages and focus the workers on the mission, etc. Then he went further. He enlisted the aid of his wife to put together a social program so that people could get to know each other in a low-pressure, non-work environment. Together they decided that she would get the wives together (you have to start somewhere), beginning with a welcome coffee at their home, and give them their immediate objective: they were to meet every other month and plan an evening or weekend social activity which would be held in the alternate months. This activity was to include all the working members of the Department of Medicine and their social partners (not just the husbands of those at the coffees); it was to be a unit activity. Since this first coffee was in the beginning of August, we had also September to work before the first evening affair in October. There were department activities in October, December, February and April, all planned and executed by the wives, but with every assistance from the Chief's office (such things as accepting the reservation calls and handling ticket sales monies, etc.). Since it was part of his plan to restore good morale to the unit, the Chief encouraged those at work to attend and eliminated any official activity that might conflict so that as many as possible could attend.

It worked. By June, when the Chief and his wife held a farewell party for all those who were leaving that year, people attended happily, glad for an occasion to be together with friends. The members of the Department were proud of the work

they were doing. The state of the morale had improved to the point that the following year a December holiday progressive dinner for the entire department was proposed by the wives, planned and executed. More than 200 participated; there were 20 volunteer host families; most of the food was provided on a coordinated pot-luck basis; and the work was done by officers as well as spouses. This from a group that 21 months before couldn't even do its job without quarrels.

NOTES:

*The AMEDD officer corps includes all of the 16,000 officers within the Medical Corps (that is, doctors), Dental Corps, Veterinary Corps, Nurse Corps, Medical Service Corps (that is, administrators), and Medical Specialties Corps.

**US Army hospitals and clinics have a command structure similar to those of installation, division, or corps headquarters. Everyone assigned to the hospital/clinic other than the commander is assigned to a headquarters company for administrative and Uniform Code of Military Justice purposes. The various parts of the hospital, from the cardiology clinic to the medical maintenance section, are functional areas with military and civilian workers assigned to work in them, but are not subordinate commands within the hospital/clinic. (This means that most AMEDD officers work in hospital/clinic staff positions of increasing complexity and responsibility with few ever occupying command positions.) As a general rule, the best measure of the responsibility of an AMEDD officer's clinic/hospital position is the number of supervised officers and senior enlisted. For example: the small hospital Logistics Division Chief who supervises the actions of two officers, two warrant officers, and eight senior enlisted has responsibilities similar to that of a company commander; the large hospital Department of Medicine Chief with 120 physicians on staff, another 150 officers from other corps, and the corresponding numbers of warrant officers and senior enlisted directs a brigade-sized effort.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

by

Sandra K. Stutz

Recruiting duty is an avenue few have the occasion to travel during their time in the military. It is an entity totally unto itself, but the assigned mission greatly impacts on the quality of our Army. Recruiting is in actuality a sales force comprised of predominately NCOs, some officers, and augmented by civilian personnel whose mission is to meet daily requirements in many categories.

Headquarters for the United States Recruiting Command is located at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. There are 56 battalions divided into five regions. We were attached to the 6th region situated on the west coast, with a brigade headquarters at Fort Baker, just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, in California. The battalion is broken down into areas commanded by captains. Smaller units under them are often one-person stations.

Some battalions had personnel which resided in proximity to one another that enabled them to socialize as an entire unit on a frequent basis. Other units had such large areas to cover that they had to rely on activities planned by the area commanders. My husband's assigned responsibility was recruiting for a major portion of the state of Washington, the panhandle of Idaho, and some western sections of Montana. When there were social functions in these other areas, we or the Sergeant Major and his wife tried to attend.

Once a year, in October, a training conference was planned for the military members of the unit, and we encouraged the families to attend. While the military were in training sessions, we set up, for the wives, workshops in color analysis, a crime prevention seminar by a dynamic officer in the Seattle Police Department, a trip to a large shopping mall with a lunch and fashion show, and a tour of a famous Washington winery. We also included a session where my husband and the Sergeant Major could address the wives and they could ask questions. Quite often, many of these wives did not know they could help their husbands with his mission. During their daily contact with the people in the community they could share the positive military life style with those who had never had any association with it before. We emphasized the importance of her ambassadorship role in the community; of which many had never thought of it in that light previously. This helped them feel good about themselves and we could see encouraging changes in them at the conference the following year.

During the in-processing at the conference we set up an area for the families, to provide them with maps, tourist information, hours of operation of the local military facilities, consumer literature, and information about CHAMPUS and medical facilities.

During the year, we kept in touch with members of the command through a newsletter that went directly to the home. We apprised them of the upcoming events arranged for the conference. Three months prior to the affair we gave them the opportunity to pay for some of the activities in advance, thus making it easier to budget for their trip. For many in the command with some road distances to cover the trip could have been a hardship if not properly organized with special rates. The military members are authorized TDY, but the extras of course were out of pocket expenses they must themselves incur.

All activities except for spouse tours and shopping trips were held in the hotel conference rooms. Because of our large booking of rooms, the hotel gave us a room where we set up a child care facility and charged a nominal fee that covered bare necessities for the children. With military personnel in conference room training sessions, we were comfortable with the fact that there was always one parent on the premises in the event of an emergency.

The awards banquet was the finale of the conference, but an evening everyone looked forward to. Many of these families lived in very small communities and did not have access to a military facility, nor did they often have the occasion to wear their dress blues and formal gowns. For us at the staff level, it was important that we made this evening special for them. The last conference prior to my husband relinquishing command, we were indeed fortunate to have with us the Sergeant Major of the Army and his wife. To those in attendance this was a highlight in their career, and it left a definite lasting impression.

Association with a recruiting battalion gave us greater insight into the workings of the Army from a very different angle. It was a rewarding experience in that recruiting is unique in nature . . . and one learns to develop new skills in the art of communication with the people of the command.

THE COMMAND TEAM: IT TAKES TWO

by

B. Jean Jones

Battalion command was one of the most interesting and rewarding experiences of my life. Jim and I were involved with the regimental system that consisted of approximately 750 soldiers, 150 wives, and 100 children. We had three COHORT rifle companies, which meant that the soldiers trained together for three years. There were peaks and valleys, but we put on our skis and tackled the course!

I went to the Change of Command with nervousness, anticipation and excitement, hoping they would just accept me as one of the girls. FIRST MISTAKE! You are not the one supporting the commander's wife anymore. You are it, honey! They want you to share, to teach, to lead them in the ways of the military. Remember, you have some very young wives who know absolutely zero about their husbands' profession.

My first project was to bring everyone together. The officers' wives, Sergeant Major's wife, and First Sergeants' wives from each company were invited to our monthly coffees. The Company Commanders' wives also met with me each month to discuss their company level activities. No one was forced to do anything. If one of the wives worked, someone within the company would pick up the slack. They were encouraged within their companies to have picnics, bake sales, parties, pot-lucks, welcome-home activities, welcome clinics for newcomers, and activities for children, like Easter Egg Hunts.

Everyone worked together and became very much involved. It is important that all wives have input, from the private's wife to the lieutenant colonel's wife. Of course there will be bickering, complaining, and sometimes downright fighting, but if you instill in them that you care, nothing can disrupt the links that bind your Chain of Concern.

We dealt with many problems within the battalion family.

1. Several young people (soldiers and wives) were alcohol and/or drug abusers.
2. There were isolated incidents of wife and child abuse.
3. Because Monterey is a high cost area, quality of life was not as good for the lower ranking soldier as we would have liked.

Jim and I felt because of these problems and the frequent deployment of soldiers there was a great need for a Family Support Group, whereby we had a network for handling problems within our own battalion family structure. The main goal was to make sure that every soldier's family was cared for.

We organized our family support unit by having a mass meeting in the post theatre for every married couple in the battalion. If the soldier brought his wife, he had the rest of the day off. Jim and I spoke to the group explaining how the Family Support Group was going to operate.

The communication network began by providing family members with names, addresses, and phone numbers of other wives in the same company. If a soldier's wife had a problem while her husband was away, she could contact others who would know where to go for help. Several of the battalion wives had attended a seminar in Active Communication Training and they served as leaders among the company-level support group and guided those who had problems. The company-level meetings were held once a month. Mass meetings with Jim and me were held every three months.

Out of the first mass meeting 30 ladies volunteered to be contacts within their companies, two of whom were bilingual. Hallelujah! We were on our way.

We learned important information from our family communication network:

1. A few of our wives could not speak English. The family group supplied babysitting so these ladies could attend English classes.

2. The soldiers and wives (especially wives) were very talented and represented a source of knowledge we tapped into regularly to obtain information which allowed us to improve the quality of life for the soldiers and their families.

3. The best way to reach the wives was through the mail and not through the husbands.

4. Praise and encouragement was essential whenever a wife volunteered her time. Jim always followed up with a personal handwritten note of thanks on his command stationery. Wives and husbands beamed with pride over this gesture.

5. A home visitation program is both necessary and beneficial. Jim encouraged first-line supervisors, NCOs, Officers, and Company Commanders to visit soldiers in their homes. Wives also visited each other when asked to do so. Jim and I visited and tried to attend every function to which we were invited.

6. To understand and appreciate one's work is important. A special day was set aside to allow the wife to visit one-half day with her husband on the job. The husband was also allowed to visit his wife on the job. If her place of work was at home, he was allowed to visit there also.

7. Your first impression of any place is a lasting one. It is very important that your method of welcoming newcomers is both friendly and informative. Welcome Clinics were held and important post officials spoke to the wives from JAG, Housing, Hospital, Nursery, AER, Loan Closet, etc. This was also useful when the men deployed for long periods of time.

8. Having the battalion Officers, Sergeant Major, First Sergeants, and wives in your home (if space provides) in a relaxed atmosphere fosters a special relationship that carries over to the job. You don't have to have them all at once because at first they feel uncomfortable. You may have the officers and wives in, and then the Sergeant Major and First Sergeants together. We also went to the NCO Club for special occasions.

9. Organization Days are necessary to bring the battalion together competitively and socially. Companies compete against each other and families come together to cheer their husbands on. The kids and wives participate in organized games and activities also. Everyone goes home feeling a sense of belonging and pride.

10. When husbands deployed for any period of time (three days or more), it was imperative to make sure all wives had the necessary information to carry on while the husbands were away. We found that some husbands didn't communicate with their wives at all. (Mass meetings before deployment left me talking to myself just trying to comprehend how naive some wives could be.)

11. Jim and I organized an Open House of the barracks in conjunction with our Family Day. Rooms were on display and prizes were given for the best room. A committee of wives whose husbands were of all ranks judged the rooms. The soldiers were so proud! At the same time, equipment displayed on the battalion grounds was manned by the soldiers, explaining to wives and parents how it all worked.

12. Rehabilitation programs were also developed by Jim for minor disciplinary problems of soldiers who just couldn't seem to adjust to military life. This was a positive program designed to give the soldier "one more chance" before a more severe disciplinary action was taken.

At Fort Ord we found that having battalion commanders' get-togethers helped to keep our sanity at times. We came together at pot-luck gatherings to share, to reflect, and just have a good time.

As Jim and I reflect back now over the command, we know that it was the greatest time of our life together. It took teamwork, open communication, understanding, patience, and most of all, a strong bond of love to be successful.

We took this command knowing our goals and ideals would touch the lives of many people. We pray our love and guidance was an inspiration for the wives, soldiers, and children of our battalion.

TACKY PARTY

by

Ann S. McClung

We're going where? This must be the reaction of every wife when she hears her husband has orders for Parris Island, South Carolina. Just the name Parris Island conjures up all the mystique that surrounds Marine Corps Boot Camp.

As one of the battalion commanders' wives, I wanted to turn this tour of duty into an enriching experience for the wives of the 3d Battalion.

The 3d Battalion had almost 30 officers, and at any one time about half of these officers were married. I was excited about the challenge, remembering all that had been done to and for me--some good and some bad. How do I start?

The week after the change of command, the 16 officers' wives were invited for brunch; the XO's wife and I went to lunch; I visited the Sergeant Major's wife. This was a start. Formal invitations were sent, and the officers and their wives of each company came to our home for dinner. By this time a month had passed and everyone was beginning to form opinions about the personalities of the battalion commander and his wife. I wanted to help shape those opinions--let's pull out all the stops!

On a ragged piece of paper in very nonuniform writing, invitations went out. "Please come to a TACKY PARTY--appropriately attired!" Some came in blue jeans, some in shorts, a few in mildly TACKY costumes. Imagine their surprise when they were met at the door by the battalion commander with a three-day growth of beard and wild clothing--and his wife in sloppy rags and hair curlers. Clotheslines were strung all over with socks and jocks. Two kettles of soup simmered on the stove with an open box of saltines. Beer was in the washing machine. (More details on how to be really TACKY are in the 1985 AWC Cookbook.) The regimental commander even brought the general, uninvited! How tacky! After this event my job was easy. We could all sit down and discuss anything.

We had an "ask anything you want to know" session. The husbands were having one of these at one of their Officer Calls at about the same time. Most of the questions asked by the wives were about social etiquette. We sometimes think young wives know "rules" of etiquette that they do not. I recommend a give-and-take exchange like this one highly. I learned that most of the young wives would like to entertain but are afraid

of failure for a variety of reasons. My comment was that the greatest honor that can be paid to a senior officer and his wife is to be invited into a junior officer's home and to be entertained just as they would family. We all laughed about some of my "failures" and soon invitations were coming our way.

The 18 months with the 3d Battalion were perhaps the most fun and the most rewarding of the 18 years of Marine Corps life. Some ideas that were particularly fun for us I would like to share with you:

We had at least one party every two months. The companies took turns planning these: beach parties, make your own pizza night at the Club with dancing, pot-lucks, game night--cards, trivial pursuit. Each month the wives got together by themselves for shopping trips, lunch out, coffees, salad lunches, and beachcombing. At some of these functions children were included; babies were always invited. Each new bride and baby was welcomed with a shower. This was the girl's decision, and some of the gifts became tradition: one girl did gorgeous cross-stitch; another gave babysitting chits; others went together to purchase a gift. These events were always fun for everyone.

One of the most memorable of our wives' activities was a pajama party complete with cokes, popcorn, chocolate chip cookies, music popular in each one's high school years, and wedding albums--what fun! Have you ever tried to teach the stroll to "ladies" born in the late '60s and early '70s? I felt ready for my rocking chair!

Several of us did have boats, so we had some fun days of water skiing or sailing. Jim and I and our kids were entertained on many weekends by a variety of lieutenants trying to learn how to ski. Of course, being on our boat was always exciting; some of the lieutenants also became good mechanics!

To make sure Valentine's Day was special for all, I had a Valentine's Day lunch. The men came just as they were and when they could with their schedules. The wives stayed, and we celebrated into the afternoon. Each man received a heart lollipop tied with a bow when he left. Some even traded flavors: Who says men aren't little boys at heart?

Christmas was another special time. It is a tradition in our family to make a gingerbread house each year, and to share this fun with another family. This time it was just a few more than one family. I made 18 batches of the gingerbread house. The wives were then invited over, and each one brought what was listed in her secret envelope--bamboo tray, eggs, powdered sugar, M&Ms, peppermints, or red hots, etc. They couldn't wait to find out what their Christmas surprise was going to be. By

the time we finished putting all the houses together, my house looked like a battleground of frosting and colored candies. Everyone was so proud of their own creation and vowed to make the gingerbread house a tradition in their families.

The end comes all too soon. We did manage, on demand, to have the second annual TACKY PARTY. By this time word had spread--no one was conservative, and the costumes were indeed something to write home about! This year we even invited the general. (Note: The general's wife's thank you note came written on a brown paper bag shoved in my door.)

A wives' tour was planned for all 3d Battalion wives, officer and enlisted. Some of the drill sergeants' wives had never even been to the training areas and had no idea what their husbands did. School-age children were invited; battalion headquarters personnel set up a nursery in a barracks for children ages 2-4 years; the babies under two years came to my house. The staff went all out in planning games and fun. It's wonderful to have good friends. I called in all the markers, and they all became nannies on this day. (Parris Island's nursery is small and could not accommodate even a small number of the children.) The results of this day made aching backs and arms all worthwhile. The wives watched their husbands train recruits, fired the M-16 rifle, ran the obstacle course, ate in the mess hall, and gained some insight into the many facets of making a recruit a Marine.

As a farewell gift for each officer's wife, I made up a cookbook of all the recipes that I had used and some family favorites--included was the gingerbread recipe and pattern.

Christmas this year was a joy, to receive cards from so many who had so enriched our lives.

THE WORKING BATTALION COMMANDER'S WIFE

by

Peggy Cope

When you see the flag symbolizing his new command pass into your husband's grasp and you hear the words of the official proclamation, your life has just changed. You have become part of a command team. The degree of impact that this new role will have on you during the months to come can vary markedly with your personality and goals, but there is an impact. As a minimum there are more meetings and events to attend, and there are specific responsibilities and obligations which simply cannot be avoided. What does this new role hold for the woman who, in addition to the family demands which she already wants to satisfy, is also a paid career professional, or who believes that it is necessary for her to obtain a job outside the home?

Commanders' wives who work outside the home have long been a contributing part of the Army community, although their ranks have been thin. In the early 1980s their numbers have begun to grow, markedly at the company level, and also at the battalion and brigade levels. I was one of these women who pursued a professional career locally while my husband commanded a battalion. Upon reflection I was not as well-prepared as I could have been if someone had helped me with my decision. Once committed to work, I needed some ideas about handling more efficiently and effectively the numerous competing responsibilities. This article addresses these issues and hopefully will assist others.

The decision to work outside the home requires a frank assessment of the lost opportunities as well as a careful look at the gains. Choosing paid employment when there are many opportunities for leadership and personal growth as a commander's wife is not something that everyone will want to do. You will never be a company, battalion or brigade commander's wife again, and it can be a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The Year of the Family has provided wives with many more ways in which they can contribute to the care, education, and personal growth of the nonmilitary members of the community and to the betterment of the climate for the family on Army posts. On the other hand, many wives do find that the enhanced self-confidence and improved managerial skills gained at work contribute significantly to their increased self-esteem and, ultimately, to a smoother running unit and happier group of wives. There are benefits in providing an alternative role model for younger wives, many of whom are also working or going to college. The monetary demands on some families may be such that a real choice does not exist. Regardless, it is important to analyze carefully how best you can use your talents while your husband

is in command. If you decide to work for pay after exploring the gains and losses, it is important to look outside of yourself and your immediate family.

As a commander's wife, there is another factor to consider: the local command environment as it relates to the issue of working wives. While the official Army position supports the right of any spouse to work, few posts welcome the idea of a leader's wife actually doing so. On the small number of posts that do, it usually is because the senior commander's wife has set the example either by working herself or by her views on the subject. Why does the environment in most Army communities tend to be negative about this issue? The principal reason appears to be that most of the current generation of senior Army spouses (wives of senior colonels and general officers) have always found fulfillment in the traditional role of women and have defined and realized their self-esteem in terms of wife, mother, and community leader. This may change somewhat in the future. For the next generation (wives of senior field grade officers) the split on the issue seems to be much wider. A second reason which contributes to the unpopularity of the idea of the working wife is the realization by those more experienced that the various demands of the community and the need to guide the younger Army wives requires a great deal of personal time and effort. This second reason should not be taken lightly. As a commander's wife, you will face the competing pressures from above as well as seemingly endless needs from below. There will be pressures, anxiety, and eventually trade-offs. Trying to juggle the life of a spouse, mother, commander's wife, and paid professional career is not for everyone. This is clearly not the best moment to decide for the first time to work outside of the home. Even a woman who has a continuing career pattern can have difficulties in meeting the demands of these roles unless she is determined to do so and receives a great deal of support. If you decide to work for pay after assessing the climate and exploring the gains and losses, there are several things which you can do to improve your chances for success in the marketplace as well as on the parade field.

The starting point and the most important step is the approach taken in developing a plan to guide your time as a commander's wife. A positive way to begin is to involve the wives of the senior leaders and your unit wives with the formulation of parts of this plan. This will enable everyone to win. The wives of the senior leaders tend to be interested primarily in making sure that their long-range goals and immediate objectives are understood by all and that they are being pursued. Through discussions with them and by performance, the wives of the senior leaders should discover that the goals and objectives you have set with your unit wives coincide with their expectations. The senior wives need to understand that you are committed to a common agenda and are working hard to support it, although your approach differs from the way they might choose to spend their time. The wives of

the senior leaders need to be reassured that your choice of a nontraditional role during the day does not preclude a strong commitment to the care of Army families and the betterment of the community. It is very important not only to contribute in both of these areas but also to ensure that what you are doing is widely known. This may sound cynical but is a fact of life for a working commander's wife.

You must take a different tact to involve the unit wives in the formulation of your plan. They have a strong need to participate in translating the broad goals and objectives of the senior wives into more tangible tasks and plans to accomplish them. Each woman should have the opportunity to define how she can best support the program and understand the importance of her contribution. You must remain flexible adjusting your approach to the strengths and weaknesses of the group. If you have a large number of wives who are working themselves or going to college, you may have to gather in the evening to discuss objectives. This approach becomes an iterative process as families are reassigned and women mature in their appreciation for married life in an Army community. The numerous tasks derived from the goals and objectives of the senior wives remain somewhat fixed while the implementation plans developed by your wives can vary. Encourage innovation and the sharing of ideas, but ensure that they follow through and accomplish the task. The unit wives then gain in their sense of accomplishment and all have contributed to the wellness of the unit and of the community.

One of the most important decisions for a commander's wife who works is the selection of a woman to represent the unit at meetings which she cannot possibly attend. By selecting a woman who is known and has the respect of the senior leadership, you send the message to the entire community that you consider its needs to be very important and that you are cognizant of your responsibilities although you are working outside of the home. The careful choice of my representative to attend meetings of the commanders' wives was easy. I was fortunate to identify a woman who not only was interested in the battalion and the community, but also wanted to participate in the improvement of both. This wonderful package was the executive officer's wife, a career woman who chose to stay home with her small child. Aside from being easy to work with, she possessed tact, patience, enthusiasm and common sense, traits which are so important for these meetings. You should not, however, limit your search to the executive officer's wife. It is far more important that your representative understand your program and want to participate in support of the battalion. There is only one caveat. Sensitivity does demand that you check the reaction of the group toward a nontraditional replacement before a captain's wife attends a meeting.

A third decision of great importance for the working commander's wife is to seek involvement with and the companionship of your peers. This contact can contribute to your personal growth as a leader and as a woman. The sharing of ideas about the motivation of younger wives, or how to handle a particular leadership situation, or how to structure a successful family support program is very useful and reassuring. Your own experiences in the past are probably not extensive enough to deal with every situation. Over time this complementary support group provides an opportunity to assure that your personal needs are met. You will need friends with whom you can discuss the frustrations and joys of your position. If there is not a tradition of a monthly commander's wives' dinner, suggest it. Get to know commanders' wives in other units outside of the organization of which you are a part. You will find that you have much in common. While your schedule may preclude having lunch with the ladies and your frequent attendance at formal teas, the warmth of such companionship is essential for the working wife and it must be actively pursued whenever possible.

Your time is a commodity that must be managed very carefully. I had to learn, for example, that entertaining can be kept simple, although not at a minimum. The big three-day preparation for dinner guests is not necessary. It is a source of stress which you can eliminate. Hamburgers and supermarket potato salad taste just as good as boeuf bourguignon when it is shared with friends. While your time is valuable, you must entertain as frequently as you can. It is one of the best opportunities to get to know those members in your husband's unit on a social basis. Used wisely, it can build an awareness of your concept about cohesion and family. Our brigade commander's wife accomplished this by initiating a monthly dinner for the battalion commanders and their wives. Responsibility for the dinner rotated among the couples. This is a good opportunity for developing that peer friendship. I appreciated her concern. You will want to make a special effort to entertain the wives of the NCOs in each company. These events help you to reaffirm their special leadership potential and encourage them to participate in your program. The wife of the sergeant major should assist you. But keep it simple. The working wife has to realize that it is the event not the menu that is important.

In retrospect, I believe that the senior wives, the community and I benefited from my decision to work. Because my job was as a teacher in the community, I became an informal liaison between the Army families and the post. Parents' concerns about issues beyond the school yard were either satisfied because a knowledgeable person was at the right place at the right time or referred to the correct agency for action. The senior wives gained valuable feedback on community programs. The post had an excellent example of how the talents and

dedication of an Army family member can support the community. Admittedly, this relationship is difficult to establish if you work off of the installation. Your impact is more subtle and tends to be defined by the involvement of your unit wives and by your volunteerism. However, regardless of where you are employed, the unit wives benefit from observing an alternative role model. Many will feel more comfortable talking to you because you are not just "Mrs. Battalion Commander's Wife." This helps to set a positive environment for the women in the battalion. This tone is furthered by delegation. The results of the involvement of the wives in a project far outweighed the possible embarrassments. I frequently asked these less experienced wives to support me by taking on specific tasks. There were times when the tasks could have been done more smoothly if I had done them myself, but the opportunity for growth and the chance to develop skills which might have gone undiscovered was worth the risk. Because I was working, attendance at school or employment outside of the home was viewed as a positive contribution instead of an excuse. This participation created a situation in which both the women and the community were the winners.

I also benefited from my choice. By developing a part of me which was unaffiliated with my husband or his command, I gained in self-esteem and personal independence. My job kept me busy when the men departed for extended field training exercises. Consequently, I have no feelings of anger or resentment about my husband's job or toward the Army for limiting my growth. My husband supported my decision, helped me to wrestle with alternative plans, and took pride in me, my accomplishments and the success of the battalion's wives. Our son, much to his delight, learned to drive so he could transport himself to football and swim team practice, growing in independence himself. He also learned more about the delicate art of balancing a career and a home with the added responsibility of community.

There were difficult days when I was tired and didn't have enough time. Many evenings were spent preparing for social gatherings several days in the future. I had only twelve hours from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. in which to accomplish what everyone else had 24 to do. Evenings were also made available for helping and guiding any unit wife. But because I had chosen to add an extra dimension to my life, I was committed to working "overtime."

If I knew then what I know now, what would I change? More time should have been taken to assess the climate for the working wife on the post. I now know that others cannot immediately identify the conviction with which you support their goals and objectives. Therefore, I would have involved those with whom I interacted earlier in the development of my plan. I would have actively cultivated a support group with my peers in order to benefit from their experience. I would have simplified

my approach to entertaining. And finally, I would have more faith in my ability. The juggling act of a battalion commander's wife and a paid professional career outside the home was right for me. Instead of a clown act, it turned into a magic show.

Would I do it again? I am not sure. But it is a good feeling to know that it can be done with proper prior planning, support, and the determination of a commander's wife.

PRIORITIES IN PERSPECTIVE

by

Sandra K. Stutz

As the distaff of the battalion commander, I was affiliated with an enlisted academic department unit that was responsible for training maintenance MOSSs for the repair of electronic switches, the autodin, and computer systems. We had all student officers attending the Basic Officers' Course and Advanced Officers' Course assigned to the battalion, which meant there were numerous community and social functions to support, such as student course coffees, teas, banquets, allied functions, brigade coffees, dinners, post hail and farewells, OWC fund raisers, thrift shop support requirements, and our own battalion social functions. In addition, we enjoyed the opportunity to sponsor a couple of Egyptian officers and their families. There seemed to be something in the way of an activity every day. Bless such stores as Kroeger's, a local grocery chain that was open 24 hours. We would usually end up doing our shopping after a late evening party.

Not long after my husband took command I offered to assist in obtaining a quote on a new OWC cookbook; I walked out with a job. I worked full time as an account executive in the printing industry. However, I took the job with stipulation that I would be able to take time off for social functions, parades, and changes of command. In my commercial capacity I was the representative for my company for both the Augusta and North Augusta Chamber of Commerce meetings, but I never forgot that I was also an unofficial ambassador of our military community.

I discovered that with so many commitments by the wives of our unit we had to find creative ways of accomplishing our goal in support of community responsibilities. The traditional way of the wives doing it all was no longer effective, especially with so many of them working full time. We realized the importance of family time, so we disbanded evening coffees in lieu of more couple and family functions. From the beginning of command, both my husband and myself shared our honest feelings with the unit. A wife would never have to worry about her husband coming home late from the Club with the excuse "the old man kept me out late." When officer calls were held at the Club, business was attended to, then the spouses were welcome to join in for dinner.

The thrift shop was not always my favorite place, but I recognized my unit's responsibility. The ladies were of great support, but there were times when they just were not available. I was on the road all day in the south, in an unair-conditioned

car, and was very tired at the end of the day, especially when temperatures soared around 100 degrees; but then, my husband had also experienced the same elements. We met for a pizza after work, then we both worked the thrift shop; and in the furniture department his help was greatly appreciated. Not long after that other male members of the community joined in this approach. It was more fun to work as couples and we looked forward to our thrift shop night together.

The NCO wives were not inclined to get together, so we would entertain them in groups from time to time. Prior to our departure from command, the brigade established an information program for the young enlisted married families. Since we now have a married Army, this was a positive step towards caring for the family, thus helping to eliminate some stress which produced a better mission-ready soldier.

As I look back, there were two outstanding senior ladies who gave me great support when I wanted to combine working with traditional community involvement. The brigade commander's wife was sensitive to the needs of today's woman and changing life styles. She was an elite example of one who had a goal of making a positive impact regarding quality of life improvements in the community. The other senior lady was the wife of the commanding general who was working full time in real estate. There were times when I was tired and had been delayed in a meeting on the other side of town. I would rush out to the installation hoping I would be on time for the parade, only to wonder if it was really worth all of that extra taxing effort. No matter what the occasion she was always there with a smile and a kind word of encouragement.

Here are a few things to remember. When the situation seems to be too overwhelming and you find that there just is not enough time in the day, sit down and ponder the following:

1. Are you keeping your priorities in proper perspective?
2. Are you taking the responsibility to keep yourself well, even if it means you might have to miss something? You cannot function effectively if you cannot concentrate on a subject because you are trying to figure out how you are going to get through a situation two hours from now.
3. See that your family is not neglected. Although unspoken, people of your husband's command consider you a leader also. Make other members of your family aware that they should always be themselves, but be conscious of the fact that others may expect them to be role models.
4. See to the needs of the members of the command, but do not be a nosey busybody.
5. Do not try to be a superwoman; . . . no one can.

6. If you make a mistake, admit it. You will be a better person for it and people will respect you. Do not carry a feeling of guilt; you took a risk. Make a friend of failure. Consider that you and others around you learned from it and it is one more stone cleared on the path to success. The most successful people in life are those who have failed many times but have picked themselves up and have gone on to accomplish great things.

7. Do not overcommit to anything; . . . easier said than done! Others suffer from this syndrome so often that the jobs they are supposed to do never are done well, or in some cases even at all. When we and others recognize this fact, we then look for alternatives to our life-style, consequently a pleasant positive change may take place. Learn to say "No" without feeling guilty.

8. Be yourself and use your own style of leadership. Use your personal power (self-esteem and comfort level) to enable others in the unit to function at their most productive plane. At that point the people should be in harmony with themselves as well as with those around them.

9. Most of all, remember they aren't "your girls." They are women, spouses of military members of the command who have an important mission. On occasions you may have a male spouse. Include them in activities.

10. Realize this is an opportunity for growth for all. How you conduct yourself will effect their desire to perhaps stay in the military. Be realistic, considerate, honest and caring, but most of all, be yourself.

WORKING WIVES AND VOLUNTEERISM

by

Maureen B. Kievenaar

Our kaserne consisted of one brigade with three Armor and one Infantry battalions. The first year I worked part time and then the second and third years I worked full time as Administrative Assistant to the Regional Manager for AMEXCO Banking in Nuernberg. I feel I must emphasize here that I strongly believe working wives have a responsibility to the community. (I will elaborate later.)

Further background is that I worked as an executive/legal secretary most of our married life--22 1/2 years. The only times I did not work were those times when either the location did not allow, we were in the process of a move, or my children were very small and still at home. I once resigned from a well-paying job when my husband was selected to be the Corps Commander's Aide-de-camp. I decided this on my own with no pressure from the Army. I never regretted that decision either, for I learned more in that assignment than I have during any one tour.

At the time my husband was in battalion command, three children left home for college. My oldest, a son, stayed behind in the United States to attend college. Both my junior and senior daughters came fighting all the way to Germany, for they were both in love. Well, that all passed and they returned to the United States at the beginning of their college years and are now in love with new people. They loved their stay in Germany and want to return some day. Just an added note: In addition to all this we sold our mini-ranch and four horses to be with the husband and father we very much love and respect during a very important part of his life. I was also making over 22,000 dollars a year at this time. I did not say this was easy.

WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AS YOUR GOAL AS A BATTALION COMMANDER'S WIFE?

It should be to pull together the family effort, give it direction and purpose, to provide the feeling that the unit is important to all members of the family--not just the soldier, and finally, the community you live in is only as good as you and your battalion family want to make it through community efforts. In short, making the soldier and his family feel proud, wanted, needed, and loved. The family should be proud of their soldier sponsor, of the way they live, and of the unique opportunities afforded all soldier families. They will feel wanted if there is love in the home, and will feel needed if

they are actively participating in their community and family growth. Ours is a very unique life-style and we should take from it all the good and make it better, all the bad and improve it to a point where it becomes good.

NOTE: The "family" consists of first your own family, second the unit family, and third the Army family (community).

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF BEFORE ENTERING THE WORLD OF COMMANDERS' WIVES.

1. Think before you speak ALWAYS. Everything you say can and will be repeated and not necessarily the way you spoke it originally. I'm not saying people are malicious--they just love quoting the commander's wife.

2. Listen very carefully to problems and make sure you understand both sides of the story before you act. People do not intentionally lie to you--they just see things from their side of the fence.

3. You will have very few, if any, lieutenants' wives.

4. 75% to 80% of the wives now work.

5. The community club versus the old Officers' Club is changing the perspective of young wives towards the OWC.

6. Because of the above, volunteers are harder to find.

7. We are forced to focus on the total married population of the Army for the volunteer service that was previously accomplished by officers' wives.

8. Sometimes NCO wives resent this fact. They think they are doing officers' wives' business. We must end this thinking and make people understand it is community business not officers' wives' business.

9. The business of family is best pulled together at the battalion level. A great deal of this foundation is at the company level.

10. Treat the wives with respect and caring. They expect you to have answers for them or be willing to help them find the answers. The senior NCO wives are a very important factor in this family. If you don't have their support, it is very hard to reach the young enlisted man's family. Remember the senior NCO wives for the most part are your age. They are a great resource for information and help if they are motivated and encouraged properly.

11. As a battalion commander's wife, be happy. Your happiness is contagious!

12. Try very hard to attend the pre-command course and any other leadership courses which might be made available to you.

A FEW WORDS ON WORKING WIVES AND VOLUNTEERISM.

1. I strongly encouraged all wives to work if they wished. At the same time they knew I believed and practiced that a working wife had her part to do for the community in making it a better place to live.

2. I also commend the wives who find total satisfaction in raising children and running a home. I sometimes wish I were one of them. I have been unable to accomplish that, so therefore I will deal mainly with the working wife.

3. Why should a wife work? It is extremely healthy for her "psychi." It helps her grow and mature with her soldier husband. It keeps her more interesting. And, most of all, she has a strong feeling of worth, for she not only receives gratification for her efforts through a paycheck, but through the respect of her fellow employees, friends and acquaintances.

4. As I stated before, I worked full time while my husband was in command. Of course I had his support. At first I felt guilty for working, but as time went on I believe my working made me a better leader for I did not have time to deal in minute detail with problems. I don't believe I had any serious problems with the spouses in general getting along. Of course there were skirmishes, but nothing which separated the women into groups. Remember also there will be some problems you yourself cannot "fix." Most of us do not have degrees in psychology. Let the professionals do their job. There may also be occasions when you choose to avoid the problem. I listen to that little voice inside me concerning these matters. All but two of my wives worked. I don't have a count on the NCO/EM wives. The wives of the CSM, 1st Sergeants, and Officers understood that I was there to help if they had a problem with their group of wives, a wife, or a family which they tried to solve without success. They would then call me for advice or help. I would only go to my husband with a problem when I had exhausted all my experience and as a last resort. I received a lot of personal gratification from helping solve these problems through the wives' channels. I only went to my husband once, and he did solve the problem.

5. We held all our social functions in the evening or on weekends to accommodate working wives since there were so many.

6. Being a working wife, I never seemed to have a great deal of difficulty getting working wives to volunteer. I told them "it's your community and you're the lucky one who has a second income," etc. "due to your ability to work."

7. The thrift shop was a problem for a short time. With all but two officers' wives working, it was hard to keep asking the same two wives to volunteer every month for two days. I felt guilty. I really had to find a solution. That was when I found the great value of the NCO wives' chain. There are many more of them. The CSM's wife also worked, but was very successful in finding volunteers for me. We even had them asking to go back. My latest thought on this is why not have the thrift shop open in the evening. Then we could get volunteers and the soldiers could bring their wives in to shop on off-duty time.

SOCIAL.

1. Ask for a social calendar for the S-1. This will not be complete, but it will give you some idea of upcoming events and how to plan for them. Also ask the specifics of social occasions, especially the ones with the Germans. Their customs are different and before each function you attend you should know exactly what the itinerary for the evening's events are so that you will not be embarrassed and your officers will not have an unusually stressful social occasion because you were unprepared. This means questions like time of arrival, whether or not food will be served, who will pay, how much, what is a polite time to arrive and leave, and of course the dress. You should also know the distance to be traveled and whether or not your hosts speak English. You may want to bring along a couple fluent in German if you are not. They would enjoy the experience also. You might want to prepare refreshments for the bus ride if it is to be a long one. I know I did, once I learned the game, and it truly made for a much more enjoyable experience. Also when in Deutschland, always bring a spring bouquet to your hostess.

2. New Year's Reception--Tradition. You should look into the traditions of the post and the plans of the other leaders. You need to coordinate so that all your invitees will be able to attend and also you especially need to get your invites out at least one month ahead so people can make their holiday plans.

3. Christmas Traditions. One needs to know the traditions for Christmas in the battalion. Usually the longest-standing member of the group should know. (Children's Christmas Parties, baking, etc.)

4. What to Do When the Men Go to the Field. There are usually traditions, such as when they return, how you welcome them home. Also, know who is in charge of communications and troubleshooting (military member of the battalion) while the men are in the field. This person should be notified when any serious problem arises. And thirdly, I strongly advise against trips to the field for families; after all, they need to experience some separation. What would they do with a hardship tour or war? It also creates more problems than you can imagine. In this case, the good does not outweigh the bad. Remember, the men go the field to work.

5. Traditions for births, weddings, etc.

6. Obtain copies of division, brigade, and battalion rosters if possible.

7. Wives' Get-Togethers (Socials). Your first social I strongly suggest be a get-together that includes the wives of the XO, S-3, Company Commanders, 1st Sergeants of each company, and of course the CSM. This is your main information channel and work force. From my experience, it is best to let the CSM's wife run the NCO wives' social group and you run the officers' wives' group. (I tried to mix them all at a large coffee with very little success.) This social is mainly for the disbursement of post information, socializing, and of course obtaining volunteers for the few functions we have left which require volunteers. It is also very important to have a very positive approach to obtaining volunteers. If you don't, you will not get them. I can't stress enough--volunteerism should be rewarding and enjoyable. Don't forget lots of sincere thanks. I have only one very strong feeling regarding the soliciting of volunteers. Don't ever tell people they must volunteer or else! It creates more problems at home and in the unit than you can ever imagine. It is also the cowardly way out. It takes no effort to tell someone they must, or because your husband is, they must or else. The satisfaction comes from educating people to the rewards of volunteerism. My blood boils when I hear of women throwing their husband's rank around. We are not in the Army, we are rather members of the proud community who surround and support the members of the armed forces.

8. Officers' Wives' Social. You should have a get-together for your officers' wives as soon as possible. The sooner you get to know these women the better you'll feel.

9. Things You Need to Know About Your Post.

- OWC: Who's Who?
- NCO: Who's Who?

- Names of Clubs on post.
- Names of volunteer organizations on post.
- List of post facilities and their hours of operation.
- List of key people and functions on the post.

10. Small Keys for Big Successes.

a. AGENDA: Whenever you have a get-together, have an agenda/itinerary you follow.

- (1) Pass them out at the start of the meeting.
- (2) This ensures you will cover all the subjects.
- (3) You and the members leave with a feeling of accomplishment.

b. NEWSLETTER: After every social meeting it is great to put out a newsletter.

- (1) Informs those who were unable to attend.
- (2) Repeats what happened to avoid misunderstandings.
- (3) Be sure to mention committees formed and volunteers' names. You need this as a reference as to who volunteered for what.
- (4) Gives you a good history on file.

c. HAIL: Welcome new spouse arrivals as soon as possible.

- (1) Set up a good procedure for this with the help of the wives. Get an outgoing hospitality person. This makes for good feelings about her/his new situation immediately.
- (2) At least two people should go on the welcome visit. Possibly set up a shopping trip or tour of the area for the next week.

d. PARTIES OR SOCIAL GET-TOGETHERS: The more people involved in planning the party, the more fun you will have. Find out what the group likes for couples/family get-togethers. Try brainstorming/experimenting.

e. FAREWELLS:

(1) Hindsight - Keep a small notebook and try to remember to jot down contributions, occasions, etc. of members so that when they are farewelled it can be accomplished in a very positive manner.

(2) Farewell Gift, Wives' Group - Ask the group what they really want for this occasion. It is the only time they feel free to change things. (That is, when the new leader arrives.)

In closing, I would like to say this is a very concise view of my experience. I sincerely hope you realize my experience was not perfect. It had lots of ups and downs. I was unable to cover everything . . . for that I would need to publish a book. Secondly, try not to make more or less of your position than it truly is. Thirdly, remember your husband needs your confidence, friendship, and patience more now than ever. Finally, and above all, enjoy this most memorable time in your life.

SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

by

Suzanne Marie Carlton

In writing this article, I would like to share my experiences as a working wife during my husband's command tour. I would also like to share my impressions of the junior officers' wives in today's Army family. Both experiences were interrelated and extremely positive.

Working full time and being the commander's wife was not always easy, but neither was it really hard. I did have to organize my time and set my priorities. Mine were, in order of importance, family and all their activities (school, church, sports, friends); the battalion members and their activities; my job; and the brigade activities.

You will notice that post-level activities do not appear, simply not time to do it all. The priorities could switch places depending on the situation, so like a good Army wife, one must be flexible.

The decision to go to work was not an easy one. Although the outgoing brigade commander's wife had worked and assured me it could be done, I still had many doubts. However, when the opportunity arose for a good job with the Army on post, in a field which utilized a recently completed degree, I couldn't resist!

My misgivings and concerns were greatly alleviated on the morning of my first day of work. A little note from Connie, the new brigade commander's wife, was taped to our front door. "Good luck, Suzy, and have a super day!"

Needless to say, I felt much better about my decision. I had also been provided with an early lesson by Connie: Always be supportive of others in their decisions and they will support you in return.

Working on post was a real advantage. The commanders' wives in the brigade met over the lunch hour so I could attend. The meetings were usually about 45 minutes long and covered everything we needed to get done. My working schedule seemed to keep the meetings on track and avoided the lengthy discussions which can evolve at similar meetings.

When support was required for brigade or OWC functions, it was possible to help by doing things which could be handled after working hours. An example was making arrangements for the menu with the Club for an OWC luncheon. These things could be done without requiring attendance and an absence from work.

Battalion coffees were held monthly and always at night. From the start I impressed on the ladies that the coffees were simply a social event, a time to get to know one another, and share experiences. Frequently the coffees would last until midnight, so the tone of the meetings must have been right.

The training battalion is small compared to other battalions. Our group of wives varied in size from eleven to a low of two. Such small numbers can make it hard to fulfill commitments such as hosting a brigade activity, sponsoring a post fund-raising event, or filling volunteer vacancies. I can honestly say that we were never short of willing helpers to get the job done.

Even those wives who had been reassigned to other units on post continued to attend the coffees and support the battalion whenever help was needed. No demands were ever placed on them, and there was always a genuine willingness to be of assistance. This generosity was another lesson learned.

The next experience I want to share is my impressions of the junior officers' wives. My impressions are of a group of enthusiastic young women all of whom supported their husbands and each other. They were varied in their interests and backgrounds and, as such, had different outlooks on what they wanted in life. In the small number of wives described earlier, there was:

- One Army captain (herself a company commander in another battalion).

- One full-time graduate student in clinical psychology.

- One secretary (who later quit to raise her baby boy).

- One young bride talented in the arts and piano, who became a key volunteer in OWC and community life.

- One fashion coordinator at a leading women's apparel store.

- One full-time mother of three children.

- One full-time mother of one child.

- One nurse in a local hospital emergency room.

As you can imagine, the sharing of interests by a group like this was tremendous. Their enthusiasm for the Army life was truly catching, and I found that as I was approaching the 20-year mark, it was just what was needed.

Another lesson learned: Encourage the wives to pursue all the interests they enjoy.

If you can assist the newcomers in getting situated through job, school, or post information, do so. Just an introduction to someone of similar interests often is all that needs to be done.

Like the Army slogan says: Give everyone the opportunity to "be all you can be."

THE FINE ART OF DELEGATING

by

Linda O. Anderson

As an ex-XO's wife, you may have some past experience with the fine art of delegating . . . from the receiving end! If the wife of the battalion commander was hard at work "maintaining her own identity" while your husband was the XO, you may have learned even more. And, if your husband was XO to a bachelor battalion commander, you are probably an expert on the subject.

In either case, I'm sure you will agree "there's a whole lot of delegating going on!"

Now that you are going to be a battalion commander's wife, delegating will take on an entirely new perspective. Out of necessity, you may have to ask for help from wives in the battalion. Whatever the reason or occasion, the battalion wives will respond much more favorably if you remember that awful feeling of "being dumped on," how worried you were that turning down the battalion commander's wife could hurt your husband's career, and vow never to be the cause of someone else's discomfort.

The definition of the verb delegate is:

1. To empower one to act for another.
2. To entrust to the care and management of another.

Keeping that definition in mind, perhaps these few self-imposed rules will help you to practice the fine art of delegating.

1. Remember your lack of authority. You are a volunteer, seeking another volunteer to take your place. After you delegate your duties or responsibilities you have given up the right to second-guess, criticize, or undermine the outcome.

2. Don't assume a wife is willing just because of her husband's position. (Remember how it felt to be a dumped-on XO's wife?)

3. Avoid the appearance by action, word or deed, implied or spoken, that you are using your husband's rank to delegate. Not only will it ruin your own reputation, it could have negative impact on your husband.

4. Be honest with yourself and others. Explain thoroughly the reasons why you can't fulfill your responsibilities, making certain everyone understands the situation, including the wives who must work with the person you have delegated. In some instances, you must have permission to be represented by a stand-in.

5. Give 100% support to the person to whom you have delegated. Be appreciative of her willingness to take on your tasks, and never take the credit for her job well done. Do be willing to assume full blame if she can't handle your job. After all, you chose her.

FORMING A SUPPORT GROUP

by

Patricia G. Bates

Nothing can be more helpful during a time of crisis or long stress than a support group that is formed from the wives of a battalion. The network that is called into play during these times and which functions effectively is usually the one that has been in place long prior to the crisis. By using the structure of commanders' spouses to convey information downward, a system can be reinforced by which a group can begin to bond into a support group. The bonded group will willingly help each other and will take much of the burden off the shoulders of the commander's wife, be she at battalion or company level.

To start this process in motion, I began to have luncheons on a quarterly basis with the company commanders' wives in an effort to get to know them and to assist them in any way that I could to get in contact with the women in their husbands' companies. As the group began to evolve, each lady was encouraged to lead with her own style, and I did not endorse any one style nor enforce upon them any particular duties other than encouraging their initial efforts. As each new company commander's wife attended, looking very uneasy about her new "role," I could watch the other more experienced leaders fill her in on the "how to's." It was peer teaching at its best, and certainly more meaningful in building a support group, not only among the company commanders' wives but also in their extending this out to the company coffees they were leading. It was perhaps my most rewarding aspect of the command position experience--to foster, teach, and watch these women grow and develop group skills that will stand them in good stead for the positions they may hold in the future.

WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BEING AN ARMY WIFE
BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

by

Nancy B. Easton

"What You Always Wanted to Know About Being An Army Wife, But Were Afraid to Ask!" is the title of a workshop I developed for the ladies of an aviation battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. It arose out of a need voiced by one of the wives who came to me and asked if I would share the knowledge accumulated after "my" many years of being an Army wife. At first I balked at the idea but then realized there was a real need by these young ladies to learn about their role in today's family-oriented Army. This need became very apparent by the attendance at the workshop. These ladies really do want to know about the world that their marriage has exposed them to--the good, the bad, and the many enjoyable and lovely roads that lie ahead.

The philosophy behind the workshop is the same philosophy I used in all my dealings as a battalion commander's wife; namely, the three C's--Care, Concern, and Communication. If you decide to give such a workshop, please remember that you are doing a real service to these young women. Attendance was entirely voluntary, but by the time I departed, over 90% of the wives had attended the workshop. I kept the groups small and the atmosphere very informal. After I had given the workshop to several officers' distaff groups, the wives of the senior NCOs asked if I would share my experiences with them. I modified the workshop and expected only five or six to attend; much to my surprise and delight about 30 ladies attended. I feel this forum provides a viable ongoing service to "our" Army community and hope to be able to repeat it again in the future to both NCOs and officers' wives. The wives of today's soldiers do care, are concerned, and will respond if they know someone cares about them.

Of course there is a risk involved to you as the facilitator of the workshop in that you set yourself up for potential criticism. However, if you interject bits of humor and some "war stories" (like the time you were a Captain's wife and served dinner to the Colonel and his lady on an ironing board), the workshop will be human and sympathetic. That is one of the definite bonuses to the workshop--the young wives will see that the "Boss'" wife is a woman with the same problems and feelings as they have.

I cannot tell you how good I felt inside after completing one of these workshops. The experience was emotionally draining but thoroughly gratifying. I also grew as a person from the interaction with these outstanding wives. One final thought, the innocent questions asked by these young ladies is a special bonus to this experience!

Following is an outline of the workshop. Please remember it is only an outline with no specific details. You will have to put your own thoughts and values into it.

WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BEING AN ARMY WIFE

1. Guidelines (for both the facilitator and the participants).
 - a. Be yourself.
 - b. Be open and honest.
 - c. Nothing personal leaves the room.
2. Introduction.
 - a. Workshop meant to be helpful not critical.
 - b. The content will contain the opinions of Nancy Easton, Fort Campbell, and the Army (the differences will be noted).
 - c. Hope you learn and will teach others.
3. The Army is People.
 - a. The family is important to today's Army.
 - b. Wives contribute to morale: remember great demands are placed on military men (they are under great stress and pressure).
 - c. Husband/wife team leads to success in any profession.
4. Duties of an Army Wife.
 - a. To Self and Family (religion aside).
 - b. To Support:
 - (1) Other wives in a caring way.
 - (2) Chain of Concern.
 - (3) Company, Battalion, Army.
5. Why Wives' Activities?
 - a. Meet others in the same situation.
 - b. Friendship.
 - c. Learning situation (about people, community, and Army).
 - d. Help improve quality of life.
 - e. Makes for unity and sense of belonging.

- f. HELP: both given and received.
- 6. Protocol.
 - a. RSVP: not obligated to give an excuse for refusal but must call regrets or acceptance.
 - b. Thank you notes: gifts, entertainment, special action.
 - c. Dinner invitations: be on time, take something, write thank-you note.
 - d. Obligations: when you are entertained, you should invite back; but remember the obligation is in the invitation.
 - e. Attendance: mandatory at _____.
- 7. Responsibilities of the Commander's Wife.
 - a. Unofficial leader of ladies.
 - b. Welcome and Welfare.
 - c. Chain of Concern.
 - d. Organize social calendar.
 - e. Supports her husband's CO's wife.
 - f. Coordinates volunteers.
- 8. Miscellaneous.
 - a. Volunteering.
 - b. Communication Skills: Example: What does the Colonel's wife really mean when she says, "I would really like you to . . ."
 - c. Your need for calendars and notebooks.
 - d. The wife and her husband's career.
 - e. Be consistent to avoid hurt feelings (babies, weddings, parties, etc.).
 - f. OWC: membership, attendance.
 - g. Entertaining: can be simple and inexpensive (don't be afraid to try).

h. Learn - Learn - Learn!!!

(1) About the Army (its structure, how it works, ranks, etc.).

(2) About what's available (ACS, AER, Red Cross, Education Center, etc.).

i. Teach - Teach - Teach!!!

Use every opportunity to help others by sharing your knowledge.

9. Questions.

BATTALION COMMANDERS' WIVES' SEMINAR FOR
COMPANY COMMANDERS' WIVES

by

Patricia G. Bates
Judith C. Karr

A need to define some basics for the company-level commander's wife was recognized by the Commanding Officers' Wives (COWS, nine in all) of Kitzingen, Germany. After a few brainstorming sessions, it was decided upon a half-day seminar of four separate topics through which all the participants would rotate. Dividing into sets of two commanders' wives per discussion/lecture group, we each developed our own topics.

Perhaps the one topic on which we all had opinions was the role of the commander's wife; and interestingly enough, we had different reasons for functioning in that role, i.e., self-growth, team player with husband, involvement with others, or making our battalion a better place, etc. But function we all did, and we considered these differences to be a strength of our group.

Our main focus throughout our time together, and for this special seminar, was "fun"! Indeed, it was the hallmark of much that we did, whether individually or as a group!

The seminar was an enormous success with much positive feedback from the participants who had a desire for more in the future. In fact, one battalion's company commanders' wives formed their own seminar for the purpose of conveying some basic information to the lieutenants' wives in the battalion. The value of all this information continued to filter throughout the coffee groups in our community for a long while afterwards.

AGENDA FOR

COMPANY COMMANDERS' WIVES' SEMINAR

(One-half day schedule with optional lunch following at the Officers' Club.)

1. Arrival: Table at door with color-coded (4) name tags that separated participants into four groups for rotation through all four topics. (Special guests floated through all groups at will.)

2. Informal Coffee Gathering.

3. General (Community Commander): Greets wives with opening remarks and reinforces their role and its importance for community.

4. Rotation Through Four Discussion/Lecture Groups.

a. Communications: flyers, thank-you notes, RSVP, acronyms, negative phone call, use of protocol office.

b. Protocol and Etiquette: short, funny test of situations.

COFFEE BREAK

c. Entertaining: tips for being a good hostess, a good guest, returning invitations, party themes, table settings, guest lists.

d. Role of CO's Wife: community resources, places to go for group functions, being visible, priorities, responsibilities in the chain of communications.

5. Return to large group for closing remarks by the General's wife. Passing out of critique sheets.

6. Informal Optional Lunch at the Officers' Club.

HANDOUTS: (1) Community Resources; (2) Responsibilities of Company, Battalion, and Brigade Commanders' Wives; (3) Table Settings (Informal and Formal); and (4) Protocol Test.

THINGS TO ARRANGE: (1) Block Babysitting at Child Care Center; (2) Invitations handled by individual battalion commander's wife, directed at company commanders' wives, but open to any and all officers' wives who wanted to attend from our community; (3) Setup and Coordination with Club; (4) Timekeeping and rotation; and (5) Special invitations to special guests.

ALL WIVES' GROUPS

by

Patricia F. Travis

Now that your husband has command, you'll hear of many different philosophies on what you are to do while he is fulfilling a dream he has had since he was commissioned! You will hear that there are right and wrong ways to be a commander's wife and you will hear of all the responsibilities you will have. I feel that instead of right and wrong ways, there are different ways; and the responsibilities you assume are determined by you. Ultimately, your husband has all the responsibilities of that battalion, to include trying to make the distaff side of the house more comfortable. It is his responsibility to see that all the Family Support Systems are available and that family members know how to use them. This is where you, his partner, can be irreplaceable! You, the Volunteer can take on the tasks of getting information to the family member and serving as his liaison with the families of the battalion.

I am not going to attempt to cover all aspects of a battalion commander's wife in this article. I simply want to share with you a few ideas concerning an All Wives' Group that helped make my two years as a commander's wife more enjoyable. It was my first experience with a group made up of wives of officers, NCOs and soldiers, and I found that it served a valuable function in our unit.

Our unit was the 2d Battalion, 20th Field Artillery, stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany. I was indeed fortunate to join a battalion that had a good "networking" system with wives of all ranks. The commander's wife before me was a super person and had worked hard on this program. She was very helpful during the transition period and I am indeed grateful for her willingness to share her information and to try to put me at ease. (This is very difficult when so many emotions are involved!) I recommend that you learn as much as you can concerning unit activities from the wife of the outgoing commander.

I did not try to change the program's basic thrust of involving as many wives as possible in events, I simply added to the agenda some ideas and activities that I thought would be fun and rewarding. I must caution you now not to be discouraged if you do not get a great turnout for every activity. At first I felt an activity was a failure if I didn't have a roomful of women. But I soon realized that the numbers do not count as much as the fact that those attending had a good time, needed the opportunity to be there with each other, and learned something.

The need for an All Wives' Group (AWG) was based partially on the fact that the men were in the field quite often, and if there is a group of officer and NCO wives who work together within the battalion, times of crises are made a little easier and planning battalion events becomes more fun. The group shared these times when the men were in garrison as well as field exercises. It provided a base for information on life in Germany, life in the military, and helped the younger wives become more sure of themselves in times of crises. The AWG did not replace the Officers' Wives' Club nor the NCO Wives' Club. It simply supplied a place where we could focus on common issues and problems with wives of all ranks, together. There were no elected officers in the AWG.

The AWG met every other month for an evening of fun and/or information. We held many of our meetings at the Chapel on the Air Base because the facility had a nursery at our disposal. We supplied sitters from among the older children who would, on occasion, volunteer their time. On occasion, they were paid with donations from the parents.

During the first few months I continued to plan the programs with the help of key women, i.e., CSM's wife, 1st Sergeants' wives, battery commanders' wives and XO's wife, and anyone else who volunteered their time. In the absence of these key women, ask those women who have a strong interest in the group to help organize the programs. After several months of using this approach, we changed to having two batteries at a time volunteer for each program. The hosting batteries took charge of the meeting as well as furnished refreshments. This wasn't a problem when the duties were shared by two batteries at a time; therefore, no hardship was placed on any one person.

The information for activities was distributed in different ways--phone tree, monthly battalion newsletter, and flyers. If it was really important, the flyer was stapled to the Leave and Earning Statement. Again, it can be very discouraging to find the flyer you've worked on for quite a while in the garbage can, but it will happen.

Some of the programs were on crafts, cooking, white elephant bingo, pot-luck dinners, skating parties, speakers for various subjects such as Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Rape Prevention, CPO Procedures, and Results from Family Symposiums were well received. However, the most popular program was one that involved the Mental Health Clinic and their presentation on family stress caused by frequent and extended field duty of the husbands. The women were able to understand that it's all right to seek help during these times without others thinking you were "crazy." It surely made a difference in field duty. The resource was already there; we just made it more accessible. Our AWG was the nucleus for our Chain of Concern when the battalion was away for long field training exercises such as

Reforger. At this time, those wives who were very active in the AWG took over in many different aspects. Some organized sitters for doctors' appointments; some provided rides for women who needed them for various reasons. We also planned more activities for wives during this time.

During the field exercises, sometimes lasting a month or more, mail call was twice daily, except Sunday. We used a room adjacent to the mailroom as a place where wives could stop in and talk with each other. There were refreshments donated by the AWG and it was a time in the day to get together and commiserate with one another. Because of these women working together to solve problems, the battalion was able to take more men to the field and had the least number returning to garrison due to family problems.

The AWG was a vital group in organizing the "Welcome Home" activity for the battalion when returning from field exercises. Sandwiches, cookies, and cakes were made by wives. Soup and drinks were supplied by the battalion and wives helped distribute it all. Welcome signs were made and a true feeling of welcome was present for the troops, especially the single soldier living in the barracks. They appreciated these women who had volunteered their time, food, and smiles for them.

Another activity of the AWG was the weekly bowling league. There were six teams with four women on each team. When a position was vacated and there were no other 2/20 wives who wished to join, we gladly accepted friends from other units. The 2/20 league used official bowling league rules and regulations just as other leagues in the community. I wasn't head of the league. The officers were elected as in any other league. They directed the activities of the league and handled any problems that came up. Even though I was only a "substitute" I attended each night because I felt it was important to show support.

The AWG was instrumental in making our battalion Christmas parties, Easter Egg Hunts for children, and "Wurst" sales very successful. Again, attendance at these functions varied due to different interests of the wives participating. If you are inclined to be actively involved in the wives' groups of the battalion, seeing that those who attend enjoy themselves, it brings many lovely rewards to you such as friendship.

When the battalion deactivated, the AWG was again vital to the transition of the families to their new duty station. These women were the contact points for my husband as well as myself to gather and disburse information as well as solve problems. The community support activities were there for us, and we used them; however, our personal contact within the "Battalion Family" was already established and we knew almost immediately when a problem arose. These wives helped each other's families through it all.

Always make sure the wives are recognized for their help and support! Your husband can help with this by recognizing the wives at every function you have as a battalion, whether it be social or professional. Parades are excellent places to recognize not only the soldier, but his spouse as well. There were certificates for each wife who participated in our programs and these were given not as a reward, rather as a symbol of appreciation and friendship. There is a difference! We also recognized the wives in the monthly newsletter and personal thank-you notes were also used. Phone calls are great for beginning one's day with a "thank you"!

To continue building the group we had welcome visits, preferably to all wives who arrived in country. At times this was not accomplished, therefore it was a project we were working to improve. The AWG was mentioned at the battalion social functions, and a "Welcome" pot-luck was presented during heavy rotation periods.

You may not choose to spend as much time as I did within the battalion itself. Some of you will work full time on jobs outside the home and others will choose to volunteer in the community. If you choose to be actively involved in the battalion and want an AWG, be prepared for it to take a great deal of your time.

The success of an AWG can be measured in many ways, but my personal experiences led me to believe that if those who attended enjoyed themselves then the event was successful! My main motivation to continue when, at times, I felt discouraged was the knowledge that those women who attended wanted to be there and I had provided that opportunity for them.

Some officers' wives feel uncomfortable at first with NCO wives and vice versa, but we are wives with one fact of life in common, other than being female, and that is our husbands are in the military and we share common problems, concerns, and interests. That in itself can be the basis for a bond of friendship, and what a nice way to form those friendships in being part of an All Wives' Group.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

by

Judith C. Karr

During the three years my husband commanded his battalion, I was fortunate to have continuity with the field grade officers' wives in the unit. All four of these women were knowledgeable and supportive and afforded me the luxury of a smoothly running spouses' group with a minimum of effort on my part and a great deal of personal pleasure. My advice to any commander's wife is to foster and to capitalize on the skills the members in your coffee group possess.

One of the most successful meetings our battalion officers' wives had came about almost accidentally. Our community was in the midst of a change in commanding generals and I wanted to ensure that the wives in our group appreciated the importance of attendance at the farewell and welcome teas for the generals' wives. I felt it was naive to assume that all the wives would know the importance of these functions, but it would have been out of character for me to simply announce that these teas were considered very special. At our coffee I simply named 10 social events which would take place in the next year and I invited everyone to rank order the ten with the understanding that there would be no right or wrong answers. The conversation which was generated by this simple exercise was informative for everyone, to include myself, and the purpose of stressing the importance of these teas was also painlessly made.

As all this was extremely informal, I do not even have a copy of the 10 events, but the following are close examples (make your own priorities):

1. Battalion Hail and Farewells.
2. OWC Monthly Luncheons.
3. Annual Branch Formal.
4. Battalion Organization Day.
5. New Year's Day Reception (Bn Cdrs).
6. Welcome Tea/Farewell Tea for generals' wives.
7. Company-level Change of Command.
8. Battalion Fund Raiser.
9. Battalion Wives' Monthly Meetings.

10. Battalion All Ranks Pot-Luck.

Another interesting experience which proved to be equally rewarding was a simple game intended to initiate conversation between the bachelor officers and the officers' wives. During the first 30 minutes of a battalion hail and farewell the husbands were restricted to the bar and the wives, dates, and bachelors met in another room. I gave everyone in our group a set of questions similar to these which follow. The simple rules of the game were: time limit of 30 minutes; answers to questions were initialed, and four points were rewarded for the initials of an opposite sexed person while one point was given for the initials of your own sex; the judge (me) was the final authority; first prize was a free dinner. The questions were:

1. Who is from your home state?
2. Who shares enthusiasm for your favorite sport?
3. Is there someone here who has never had a motor vehicle ticket?
4. Was anyone born within one week of you? (Year is not a player.)
5. Who does not like beer?
6. Can you identify someone who likes to play backgammon?
7. Do any two prefer the same TV show?
8. Who has a hobby which you also enjoy?
9. Will anyone be willing to admit to being able to wiggle their ears?
10. Find someone who has been on vacation during the past month.
11. Who drives a bright red car?
12. What person in the room has the most siblings?
13. Whose mother has a Biblical first name?
14. Who owns a very large pet?
15. Whose first and last names contain the exact number of letters as your first and last names?

The impact of the event was extensive. For example, the wives discovered an untapped source of eager babysitters and the bachelors received a box of baked goods marked "For bachelors only" while they were out on the next field trip. At the next

Hail and Farewell each woman was presented a rose, and the bachelors delivered Valentines to our doors on Valentine's Day.

Either of these casual "games" could be adapted to a variety of situations. Even though nearly everyone enjoyed playing, the real values proved to be increased awareness, shared information, and a feeling of camaraderie.

THE CHANGE OF COMMAND

by

Patricia C. Zetterberg

The change of command ceremony is a tradition shared by military services the world over. The U.S. Army tradition can trace its roots to 1775 when George Washington assumed command of the new American Army. (Unfortunately, there is no mention of Martha's role available.)

The traditional act of transferring the unit colors from the old to the new commander represents the unit's continuity during the change of command ceremony. Although the focus of the ceremony is on the soldier side, it's a significant event for the new commander's wife, and an event that holds special responsibility for the outgoing commander's wife.

My thoughts on this subject are not supported by written traditions or guidelines, but are grounded in my own personal experiences and biases. The basis of my comments revolve around three premises.

First, the Army, like it or not, has institutionalized (not regulated) the idea that the commander and his wife are a team. Although I recognize that battalion commanders sometimes command alone, it's more the exception than the rule. And even in this case, a wife in the unit usually is designated to facilitate the social leadership.

Second, the unit is not a personal possession. It's people, equipment, and a mission that has been entrusted to an individual for a limited period of time. (Applies to wives equally.)

Third, it is the responsibility of the outgoing commander (and wife) to actually facilitate the transfer of the loyalty of that unit successfully to the incoming commander and his wife.

With that in mind, let me suggest that there are three distinct phases (sounds terribly military) of distaff responsibility: (1) Preparation for change of command, (2) Change of Command, and (3) After change of command. All phases should be punctuated with hospitality.

BEFORE:

- Write or call Mrs. Incoming.
- Send roster and schedule of upcoming events.
- Meet with Mrs. Incoming.

- Offer to make temporary housing arrangements, etc.
- Talk to unit wives about change of command and representatives to welcome new commander's wife.
- Allay fears and apprehensions in unit and with Mrs. Incoming.
- Be honest about responsibilities that Mrs. Incoming will be assuming.
- Don't gossip.

DAY OF CHANGE OF COMMAND:

- Make Mrs. Incoming feel welcome and comfortable.
- Introduce to special guests.
- Welcome her special guests.

AFTER:

- Retain friendships, but maintain low profile.
- Don't share in unit gossip.
- Maintain friendship with new commander's wife.

Change of command is a time of transition and an emotional experience for everyone involved, no matter what the level of command. People will be moving into new areas of responsibility and for some, doing things for the first time. Along with entering new positions there is a certain level of anxiety, but add the element of new plus unknown and the stress and anxiety levels increase twofold. Much has to be considered at this time to ensure that the transition from outgoing to incoming commanders goes smoothly for commanders, their wives, and the personnel in the unit. Past experience shows that organization, consideration, and a theme of hospitality help to ensure that all people involved have their needs met. Adopt hospitality as your theme and practice it in every aspect of your behavior during change of command.

Part of the emotional feelings during change of command are due in part to the need for people to establish their credibility with the "new folks." People are naturally concerned about change and will be a little uneasy about the new situation until "the way you do business is established" and the anxiety about change in policy has been eased.

The outgoing commander and his wife have the ability to alleviate some of the anxiety and stress produced by change of command. Hopefully, some of the following suggestions will aid both the incoming and outgoing commanders and wives.

A perception is that the commanders and their wives know exactly what to do and are totally qualified to handle the "new job." In all honesty, the new commander and his wife have the least amount of information about the unit and rely on the honesty and openness of the battalion personnel to "bring them up to speed." Education breeds confidence. You can only do your homework with the information that you have available.

Two forces are working at change of command time. The actions and emotions of the departing and the actions and emotions of the incoming. The goal is to have the two sets of actions and emotions flowing together in harmony into one stable stream covering the unit. Communication is the key element in achieving this goal.

The outgoing is leaving and along with departure is the issue of leaving behind and saying goodbye with a willingness to let go and move on. The flag must be passed as must the loyalty from one commander to the next. The friendships made during command will never change but can be carried on for a lifetime. Command is stewardship, not ownership; service not possession. The commander and his wife should have the command in such good order and so well-prepared for transition that the unit flows from one leader to the other with ease and grace.

The outgoing commander and his wife's ability to affect the climate and tenor of the change of command is far greater than the incoming commander and his wife.

Mrs. Outgoing has the opportunity to set a tenor of hospitality into motion that can be practiced in every planning aspect of change of command. The ultimate goal is to smoothly facilitate the integration of the new commander and his wife for the benefit of the unit.

Here are some guidelines that might help Mrs. Outgoing to achieve the smooth transition. Keep in mind the concern is for the welfare of the unit.

Concern for the unknown often causes an increased anxiety. Natural concerns include: What new responsibility will be required of me? How will I be received? What will the new community have to offer to meet my needs, etc.?

Mrs. Outgoing can, a month or two prior to change of command, contact Mrs. Incoming by telephone or letter and establish a warm rapport to convey a message that she will be available to share and answer all questions. Typical topics

that may come up in letters or conversations between Mrs. Outgoing and Mrs. Incoming include: quarters, schools, shopping, unit social activities, post commitments, potential of meeting Executive Officer's wife and/or other battalion commanders' wives before change of command, attire for change of command, and unit functions. Be prepared to assist in these areas.

The following is a suggested list of items to be sent through the mail:

1. Current unit duty roster plus wives' social roster.
2. Schedule of events for change of command.
3. Information on recommended clothing, climate, place of ceremony, etc. Calendar of scheduled social events to include any welcoming functions planned for the incoming commander and his wife.
4. A note to notify Mrs. Incoming that the Executive Officer's wife will be contacting her to see if she has any special needs at change of command time. (Babysitting during ceremony, help for elderly parents, etc.)

It helps to have Mrs. Outgoing available to greet Mrs. Incoming upon her arrival so that a warm welcome is assured and any possible needs can be identified.

For the benefit of the unit, the outgoing commander's wife has a responsibility to prepare the unit wives for the change of command. She will want to acknowledge her personal feelings for the unit, the wives, the post, etc. She must convey to the wives that her friendship with them will never change, but her professional relationship and position of leadership ceases as the flag is passed. Their loyalty must be passed on to the new leader. There is a sense of sadness and loss at these times and that should be discussed because it is very real.

The Executive Officer's wife should be encouraged to prepare for the arrival of Mrs. Incoming. She should contact Mrs. Incoming at least four to six weeks prior to change of command to discuss her arrival needs and the welcome event. Contact by the Executive Officer's wife is a key factor in setting the example among the wives for the change of support and loyalty to the new lady. If the Executive Officer's wife does not let go of her attachment and loyalty to Mrs. Outgoing, it will make it very difficult for other wives to attach to the new wife.

Mrs. Outgoing should make arrangements to have a time to brief Mrs. Incoming to discuss:

1. Key Persons: Use social roster to identify those who might serve as hospitality chairman, treasurer, thrift shop chairman, etc., and explain their responsibilities.

2. Meetings: Give list of names and content of meetings, times and places which commanders' wives regularly attend.

3. Scheduled Social Events: A calendar with specific information about social events already scheduled, including any welcoming events.

4. Financial Assets: If a treasury is used, discuss what the financial procedures are that the wives' group follows.

5. Unit Gifts: Give information on occasion, cost, and where purchased.

6. Unit Policies: Explain traditions and policies which pertain to the wives' group.

a. Monthly Coffees.

b. Baby Showers (if given).

c. Hospitality Procedures.

d. Volunteer Commitments.

7. Command Structure: Explain unit's organization, relationship to parent unit, and sister battalions.

8. Welcoming Function: Planning may be done with Mrs. Outgoing or the Executive Officer's wife.

What happens if the old commander's wife doesn't contact you and is not hospitable? Contact her and show how flexible and gracious you can be. Remember, when you leave the unit you can change the tenor and put your own stamp of hospitality on your departure. Keep a list of those things that need to be changed and review it when it is your turn to welcome your successor.

What happens if you contact the incoming wife and she's disinterested? Show your maturity and don't gossip. Offer your hospitality and prepare the wives for transition.

Mrs. Incoming has many balls to juggle as change of command approaches. Departure for her present duty station is often accompanied by sale of home, farewell to overseas culture, separation from comfortable community, and the inevitable adjustment of dealing with children in transition.

Separation and reattachment are major stress-producing elements in military life for every member of the incoming and outgoing families and must be recognized and dealt with. The denial of these factors only prolongs the resettlement process.

Mrs. Incoming will need to remember that her ability to be flexible during the move and change of command will set the tenor in her home and be the most important contribution she can make to the command structure. Keep a sense of humor and don't have too many expectations. Too many expectations only leads to disappointments. This is a learning experience for you. Take advantage of the opportunity. When in doubt during these days of transition, smile and keep smiling until you feel the old comfortable confidence coming through again.

Change of command has taken place and Mrs. Incoming has assumed her new leadership roll and is listening and learning from all the members of the community and unit around her. She is busy getting her family and home settled and in order. Mrs. Outgoing has graciously stepped down from the leadership and continues her friendships on post and in the unit separate from her former leadership roll. If Mrs. Outgoing returns to any unit functions after change of command, she can cause a sense of uneasiness among the unit wives whose loyalty she once had when she was their leader. This is a delicate issue and one that has many solutions. My view is that a considerate former commander's wife will make it clear before her departure that she will not be returning and as one commander's wife who stayed on the same post was quoted as saying to her dear friends, "You won't be hearing from me unless you call." Many would think this is too harsh and curt, but what Mrs. Outgoing is saying is that I am stepping down and won't be interfering in your new relationship and won't call and ask any questions. The "unless you call me" means I will be delighted to hear from you and continue our friendship if you so desire. She also is saying just because I was the battalion commander's wife doesn't mean that you should feel obligated to continue having contact with me unless you choose to.

If Mrs. Incoming and Mrs. Outgoing should be on the same post after change of command, an obvious regard and respect for each other should be known in the unit because of the kind and supportive behavior of both ladies.

As we progress from duty to duty, we can look back at change of command with all its traditions and possibilities as one of the most exciting adventures that we are challenged to accept.

I commend the wives who are willing to stand beside their husbands in the command assignment and lead with their own individuality and style, and are sensitive to the individual desires and hopes of the ever-wonderful and changing roles of today's Army wives.

by

Linda O. Anderson
Patricia G. Bates

HOSPITALITY

Visits, Plans
Rosters, Maps
Newsletters
Transportation
Food in Fridge
Basket of Fruit

COFFEE PROGRAMS

Share-a-Craft
Speakers, Auctions
Makeup Demos
Wedding Album Sharing
Recipe Swaps
Couples' Coffees
Etiquette Q&A
Chaplain Q&A
How To's?
Gripe Night
Book Swap

PARTY PLANNER

Tater tete-a-tete
Irish Wake (birthday)
Ethnic Dinners, BYO
Gong Shows
Road Rally
Picnic
Sports (coed)
Toga
Blue Jean Brunch
Casino Night
Talent Shows
Wild West
Sadie Hawkins
Crazy Hat
Valentine's Day Massacre
(Roaring Twenties)
Surprise Brown Bag Lunches
in the battalion area
Pot-luck Anything

MONEY RAISERS

Attic Auctions
Bake Sales
Raffles
Sandwich Sales
Craft Sales
Snacks at Games

MORALE BOOSTERS FOR SOLDIERS

Welcome Home Baked Goods
Sew-ins
Valentines
Decorate Dayrooms
After-IG Cookies
Family Day Displays
Mess Hall Family Nights
Family Picnics
Holiday Parties
Snapshots and Movies of
Parades, Training

ESPRIT-BUILDING PROJECTS

New Baby Bundles
Wives' Telephone Tree
Swap-a-Sitter Service
Secret Pals
Gift Wraps for Soldiers
Welcome Wagon
Children's Easter Egg Hunt
& Christmas Party
Adopt a local charity,
orphanage, nursing home,
shelter, school, hospital
Newsletter
Newcomer's Tour
Unit Cookbook
Bride's Basket
New Mommy Casserole
Miniature Unit or Branch Pins
for wives

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